



GOOSE GREEN: 2 PARA'S FIGHT FOR THE FALKLANDS

HISTORY *of* WAR



**"I SURVIVED
BECAUSE OF LUCK"**

ONE RIFLEMAN'S JOURNEY
FROM ALAMEIN TO DRESDEN



**SECRETS OF THE
FOREIGN
LEGION**

1916-2016

100 YEARS ON, WE REMEMBER

VERDUN

Discover the bold strategy and incredible sacrifice that saved France from annihilation



**CARNAGE IN
KASHMIR**

MOUNTAINOUS MAYHEM
IN THE WAKE OF PARTITION



**DE HAVILLAND
MOSQUITO**

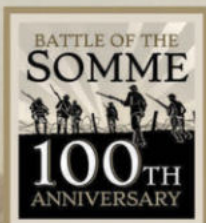
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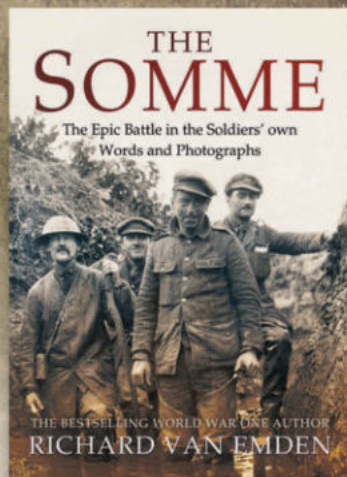
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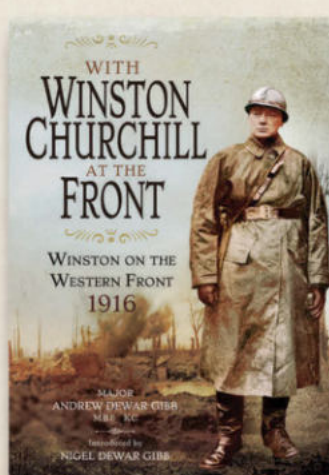
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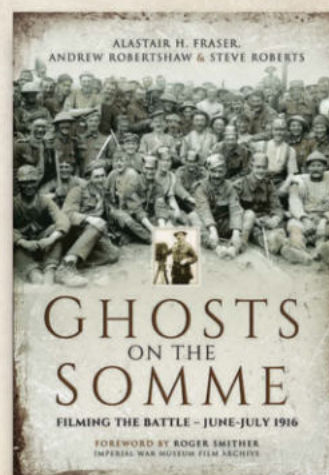
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Welcome

“Ils n’ont pas passé”

(English: They did not pass)

– Inscription at the Mort-Homme memorial, Verdun

This year is set to mark a number of sobering WWI centenaries, bringing an extra poignancy to annual commemorations the world over.

While many in the UK will be looking to the anniversary of the Somme, across the Channel a different battlefield, no less mournful and tragic, will be in the minds of many: Verdun.

It was here in 1916 that the longest and among the bloodiest battles raged on, as the French and German armies mauled each other relentlessly.

This issue explores the background to this brutal campaign, from the details of

Erich von Falkenhayn’s terrifying strategy, to the formidable forts designed to save France from invasion and utter defeat.



Tim Williamson
Editor



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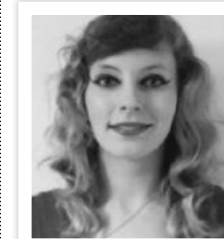
TOM GARNER

Placing both feet firmly in the 20th century this month, Tom sat down with WWI veteran Victor Gregg, who fought from Alamein to Market Garden (page 58) and Falklands veteran Philip Neame, who led D Company at Goose Green (page 26).



JONATHAN KRAUSE

Jonathan is an Oxford University Research Associate and author with an expertise in the French army during WWI. In this first of a two-part series, he unpacks the decisions and strategies on the path towards the Battle of Verdun (page 38).



ALICE BARNES-BROWN

In the War of 1812 against the USA, Britain allied itself with a confederation of Native American tribes, waging their own war against the States. This issue, Alice recounts the story of this rebellion’s largely forgotten leader, Tecumseh (page 50).

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During the Battle of Verdun, French soldiers move in for the attack. Read more on page 38

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In one of the Legion's most famous encounters, a small group of soldiers make their last stand

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The Huns stand at the gates of a waning empire and only one man can stop them

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In the wake of partition, this Pakistan-Indian border territory has rarely had peace

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Confederate cipher
This device was used to send coded messages in the Civil War... when it worked

CARNAGE IN KASHMIR



84 The mountainous mayhem in the wake of partition





WAR_{in} **FOCUS**

GOING DOWN IN FLAMES

Taken: June 1944

A Japanese plane plummets towards the sea after being shot out of the sky, while attacking the USS Kitkun Bay. The group of escort carriers came under attack near the Mariana Islands, in the outset of the Battle of Saipan, 1944, where the US invasion fleet emerged victorious.

WARⁱⁿ FOCUS

NAPOLEON NEAR BORODINO

Painted: 1897

Here Vasily Vereshchagin depicts the frustrated Emperor of France, as he watches his Grand Armée fail to break the Russian army on 7 September, 1812. The French would take Moscow a week after the battle.



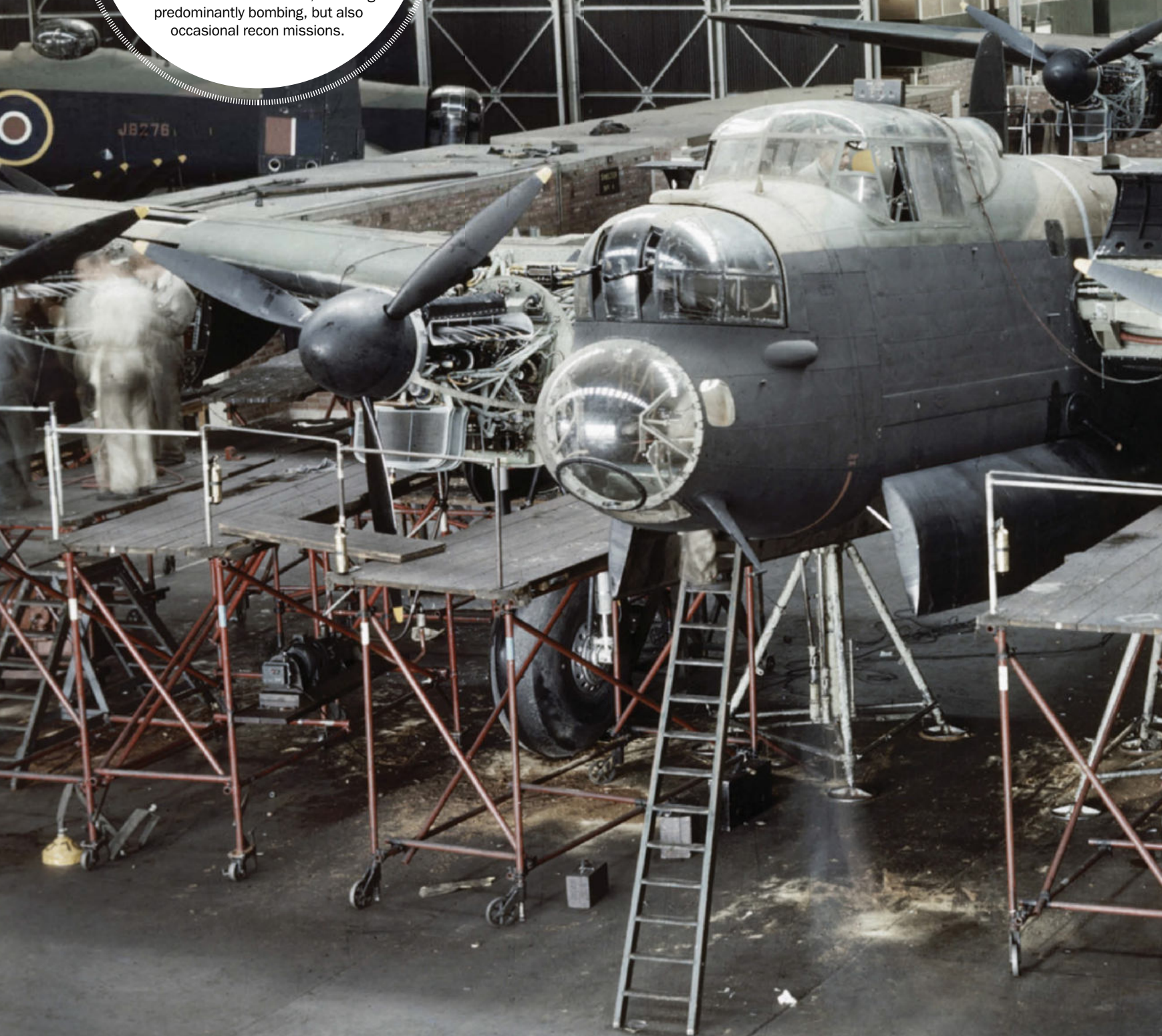


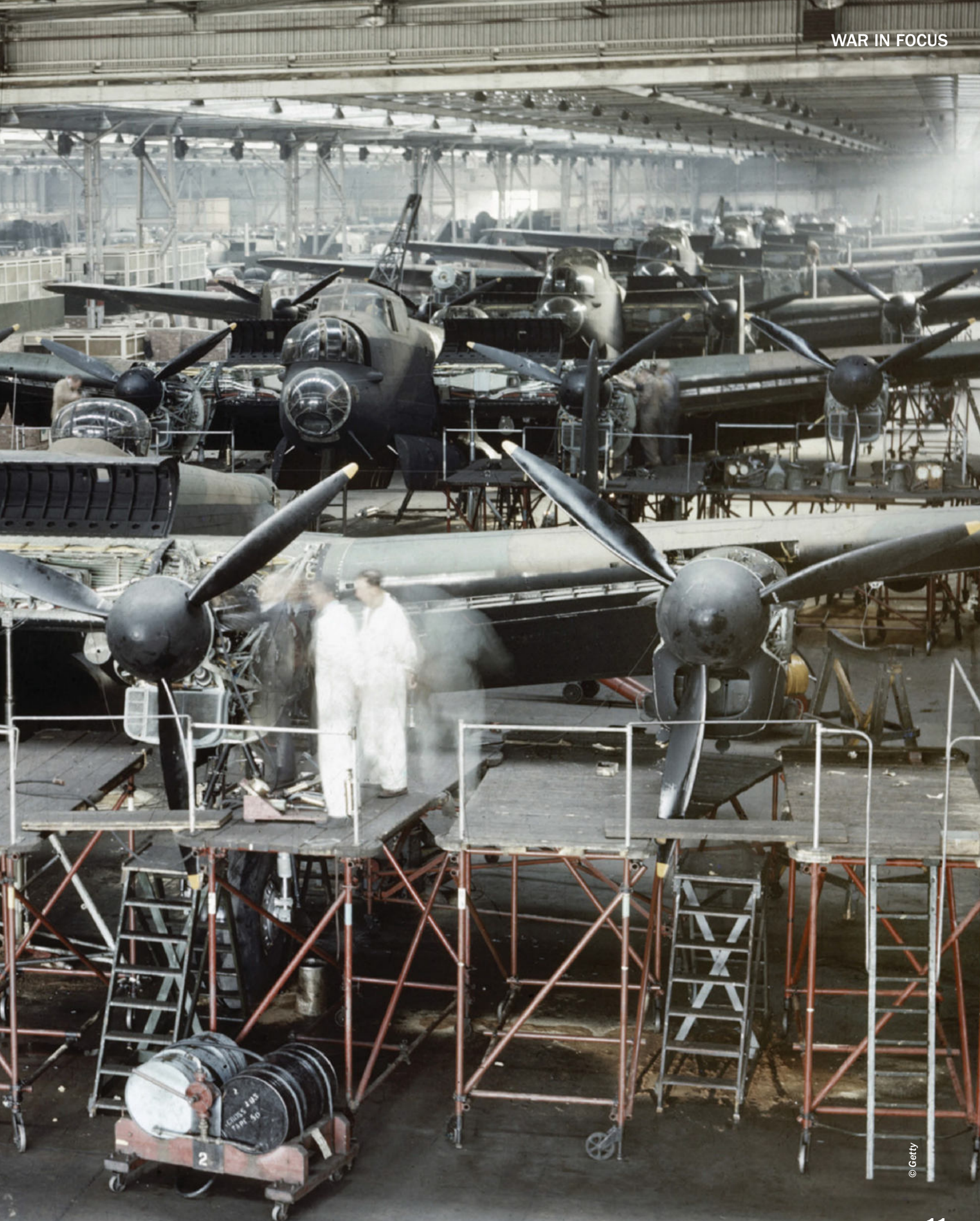
WARⁱⁿ FOCUS

READY FOR ACTION

Taken: 6 May 1943

Avro Lancaster bombers near completion at the A V Roe & Co factory in Cheshire. In total over 7,000 Lancasters were produced during WWII, contributing to over 150,000 Bomber Command sorties, including predominantly bombing, but also occasional recon missions.







The image shows a first-person perspective from the cockpit of a Lynx helicopter. The pilot, wearing a green helmet and a tan flight suit with a yellow and black striped sleeve, is looking out of the cockpit. Below, the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea are visible, with the HMS Montrose, a Type 23 frigate, sailing on the right. The cockpit is filled with various instruments, including a central display showing '222 194 20.4', and several control panels with buttons and switches. The overall scene is a vertigo-inducing view from a high altitude.

WARⁱⁿ **FOCUS**

DON'T LOOK DOWN

Taken: **15 January 2014**

The crew of a Lynx helicopter get a vertigo-inducing view of HMS Montrose, while tilting the nose of their aircraft during operations in the Mediterranean Sea. The Type 23 frigate was taking part in Operation Recsyr, a multi-national mission to transport chemical weapons out of war-torn Syria.



THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION

Founded by the last King of France, the Foreign Legion has seen action all over the world, in adventures both great and obscure

SIEGE OF TUYEN QUANG

During the Sino-French War in Vietnam, 630 Legionnaires successfully defended the small fortress of Tuyen Quang against a Chinese army of 12,000 men, resulting in one of the Legion's most legendary victories to date.



Above: The Siege of Tuyen Quang depicted in 'Défense héroïque de Tuyen-quan' in 1885

MARCH 1831

Louis Philippe initially organised the Legion into one regiment in 1831 but added another a decade later

BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

The Legion was formed in 1831 when King Louis Philippe of France created a new military unit composed of foreign volunteers. The government guaranteed anonymity and a new identity for all recruits. This condition of service became one of the Legion's oldest traditions.

1841-54

In 1844 Louis Philippe awarded the Legion its own standard after a heroic charge at M'chouneche under the duc d'Aumale

PACIFYING ALGERIA

The Legion's long association with Algeria arose from taking part in its conquest during the 19th century. It moved to the outpost of Sidi Bel Abbès in 1843, which remained its headquarters until 1962.

30 APRIL 1863

THE LEGEND OF CAMARON

In this battle, 62 Legionnaires and 3 officers fought nearly 2,000 Mexican soldiers near the village of Camarón. Nearly all of the Legionnaires were killed. The remaining five launched a suicidal bayonet charge and the survivors were spared by the Mexicans.

Right: Camarón became the embodiment of the Legion's courage and determination to fight to the death





Lieutenant Colonel Rollet holds a Foreign Legion flag decorated with the Legion of Honour and six military crosses during World War I

THE LEGION IN THE GREAT WAR

During World War I, despite being perceived as an Africa-based army, the Legion mainly fought on the Western Front, including Verdun. It also served at Gallipoli and in the Balkans and Russia.



An honour guard from 6th Battalion await the arrival of Lt Gen Khalid Bin Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz

MODERN OPERATIONS

The Foreign Legion has remained a highly active force seeing action in many war zones including the Gulf War, Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo, Afghanistan and most recently in Mali between 2013-14.

1914

1940

1954

2014



The Free French 13th Demi-Brigade of the Legion distinguished itself in North Africa particularly at Bir Hakeim in 1942

SPLIT ALLEGIANCES

During World War II the Legion's loyalties were divided after the fall of France. Elements of the Legion joined the Free French forces, while others joined the Vichy regime.

In the trenches: the Viet Minh shelling the Legion from distant hills

DISASTER IN VIETNAM

The Legion lost over 10,000 men during the First Indochina War including at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. Here many Legionnaires fought a dogged but disastrous fight against the Viet Minh.



Images: Getty

THE LEGION AROUND THE GLOBE

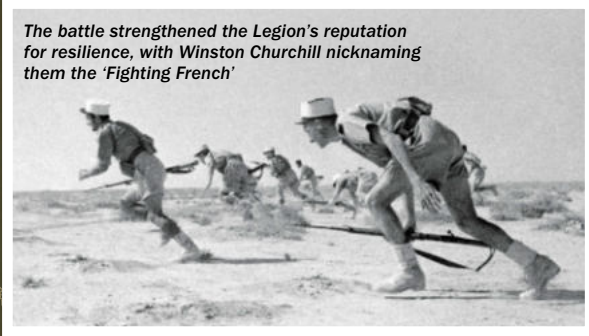
From its earliest inception to the modern incarnation, the Legion has been involved in conflicts across the world

1 BATTLE OF BIR HAKEIM

LIBYA, 26 MAY - 11 JUNE 1942

Taking place during the Battle of Gazala in World War II, the siege at the Libyan oasis of Bir Hakeim saw the Legion holding off a much larger Axis force. The Legionnaires held out for so long that Rommel was later forced to abandon his plans to invade Malta.

The battle strengthened the Legion's reputation for resilience, with Winston Churchill nicknaming them the 'Fighting French'

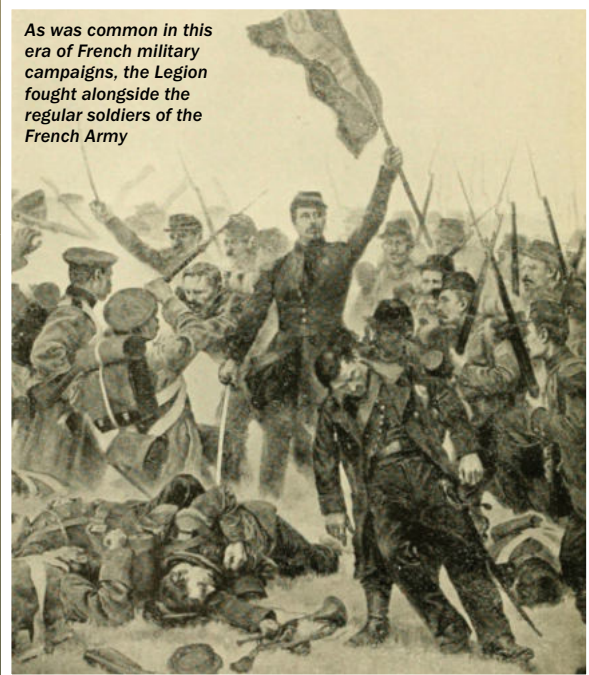


2 BATTLE OF SOLFERINO

24 JUNE 1859

The French Foreign Legion was part of the allied French-Sardinian war effort against the Austrian forces of Emperor Franz Joseph I. Their hardy fighting tactics led to a decisive victory for the Allies.

As was common in this era of French military campaigns, the Legion fought alongside the regular soldiers of the French Army



BATTLE OF TERAPEGUI

Date: 26 April 1836 **Location:** Spain

A battle during Spain's Carlist War, which saw a group known as the Constitutionalists (aided by the Legion) defeat the Carlists.

BATTLE OF HUESCA

Date: 24 May 1837 **Location:** Spain

This severely damaged the Legion, as its forces were almost halved, though its liberal Spanish allies were eventually victorious.

BATTLE OF MAGENTA

Date: 4 June 1859 **Location:** Italy

Ending in a French-Sardinian victory, this formed part of the Second Italian War for Independence.

SIEGE OF MADIOUNA

Date: 10 June 1925 **Location:** Morocco

One of the many skirmishes fought during the Rif War in Morocco, this siege was a significant defeat for the Legion.

OPERATION JUMELLES

Date: July 1959 – March 1960 **Location:** Algeria

One of the many battles fought between the French Army and the FLN (Algerian National Liberation Front) during the Algerian War.

BATTLE OF MAISON CARRÉE

Date: 27 April 1832 **Location:** Algeria

A battle fought between the Legion and the Algerian El Oufia tribe, the conflict would culminate in a decisive French victory.

OPERATION UNICORN

Date: 2004-2015 **Location:** Ivory Coast

A peacekeeping initiative by the French Armed Forces to restore peace during the ongoing violence in the Ivory Coast.

SECOND FRANCO-DAHOMEAN WAR

Date: 4 July 1892 - 15 January 1894 **Location:** Benin

A long-running conflict of small battles and skirmishes between France and the Kingdom of Dahomey (modern Benin)

3 BATTLE OF INKERMANN

5 NOVEMBER 1854

One of the bloodiest encounters of the Crimean War saw the allied forces of Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire crush those of Imperial Russia. This led to the Siege of Sevastopol and the end of the conflict.

4 BATTLE OF DIEN BIEN PHU

13 MARCH - 7 MAY 1954

A disaster for the French military efforts in Indonesia, the French would have been crushed completely were it not for the Legion relief effort that parachuted in to save them from the Viet Minh army.

MANDINGO WARS

Date: 1883-1898

Location: West Africa

A series of three conflicts fought between France and the Wassoulou Empire that would see France and the Legion rise victorious.

5 BATTLE OF THE ALMA

20 SEPTEMBER 1854

Considered to be the first battle of the Crimean War, this encounter saw French, British and Ottoman forces clash with Russia. The Legion represented a significant part of the French forces and helped repel the Russian army.

"THE LEGION REPRESENTED A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE FRENCH FORCES AND HELPED REPEL THE RUSSIAN ARMY"

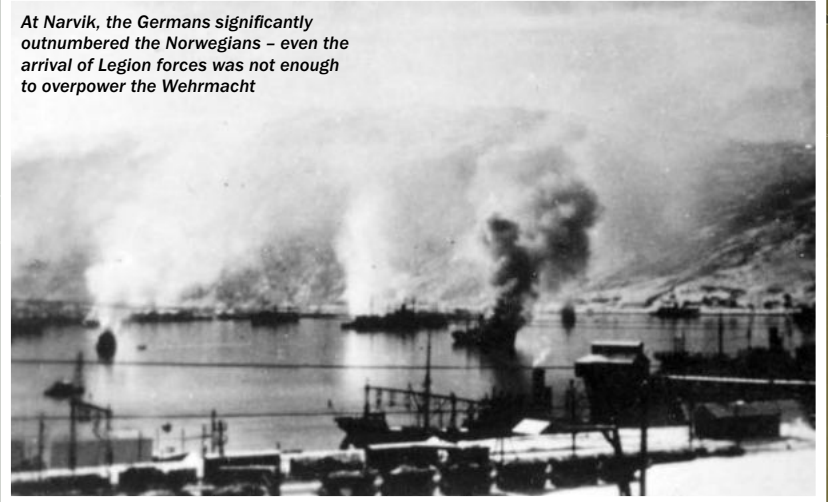


After the Battle of the Alma, the Legion was distributed across the Crimea and took part in everything from offensive manoeuvres to reconstruction

6 BATTLES OF NARVIK

9 APRIL - 8 JUNE 1940

The Legion was sent by high command to relieve Norwegian forces against invasion by Nazi Germany during World War II. They helped hold back the German army but the Germans would ultimately retain control of Norway.



At Narvik, the Germans significantly outnumbered the Norwegians – even the arrival of Legion forces was not enough to overpower the Wehrmacht

FIRST BATTLE OF KRITHIA

Date: 28 April 1915 **Location:** Turkey

The opening attempt to advance in the Battle of Gallipoli against the forces of the Ottoman Empire, which ended in defeat for the Allies.

OPERATION BALISTE

Date: July 2006 **Location:** Lebanon

During the 2006 Lebanon War, this mission was used to rescue European Union citizens caught in the conflict.

BATTLE OF KOLWEZI

Date: 18 May – 22 May 1978

Location: Zaire (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

When the Front for the National Liberation of the Congo attempted to take over French-controlled Zaire, the Legion successfully stopped the rebels.

KEELUNG CAMPAIGN

Date: August 1884 – March 1885

Location: Taiwan

Culminating in a tactical stalemate, this was another battle in the conflict between France and China for control of Taiwan.

BATTLE OF YU OC

Date: 19 November 1884

Location: Vietnam

Fought during the French-Sino War, this clash saw the Legion successfully relieve French forces under siege.

7 OPERATION SERVAL

11 JANUARY 2013–15 JULY 2014

Operation Serval saw a coalition between the Malian army, the French military and the Foreign Legion to drive out Islamic militants from the north of the country. The Legion was joined by the French Navy and the Air Force and led to a definitive allied victory.



Operation Serval was named after a type of wild cat usually found in sub-Saharan Africa

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

The Foreign Legion has consistently been one of the most well-equipped forces in the world, with an innovative arsenal both past and present

Since its inception, the Foreign Legion has always been stocked with plentiful supplies of the latest military hardware, combining innovation with efficiency, functionality and technological advances. In 185 years, it has gone from using breech-loading rifles and petrol-lamp telegraphs to anti-tank missiles, armoured amphibious vehicles and high-speed troop carriers that can even take on helicopters.

BAYONET

Each Chassepôt was issued with a yataghan-style short-sword bayonet. They were loved by the Legionnaires and feared by opponents, but they were of limited use against breech-loading weapons and artillery.

FUSIL MLE 1866 'CHASSEPÔT'

The Chassepôt was a breech-loading rifle that was designed to replace the obsolete muzzle-loading rifle. For Legionnaires, abandoning your rifle on the battlefield was a grave offence. The Chassepôt was used during the Franco-Prussian War, the first time the Legion fought on native French soil.

LENGTH: 1,305MM
WEIGHT: 4.6KG
BARREL: 795MM
CARTRIDGE: 11MM ROUND
IN SERVICE: 1866-74

**"FOR LEGIONNAIRES,
ABANDONING
YOUR RIFLE ON THE
BATTLEFIELD WAS A
GRAVE OFFENCE"**

CARTRIDGE

Each Legionnaire was issued with 83 rounds of ammunition. The cartridge was an 11mm conical lead round wrapped in greased paper. Unlike earlier weapons, the Chassepôt's paper wrapping did not need to be bitten open to remove its contents for firing. The round, made of lead and paper, was also cheaper than other purely metallic cartridges.

BREECH

The key innovation of the rifle was a rubber ring located inside the breech. Although it was fragile, the ring was the best way to seal the loading chamber and prevent gasses escaping. This enabled the Chassepôt to be easier to fire and safer to use than other contemporary rifles.

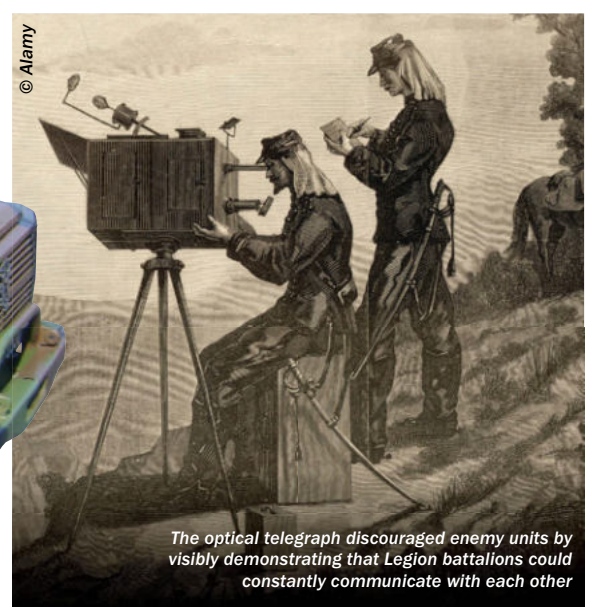




PEUGEOT P4

The P4 is a light, armoured 4x4 vehicle that entered service in 1982 and was used by the Legion until around 2015. It has an operational range of 600 kilometres and can be fitted with various adapters for mounting machine guns and other weapons. Some have been fitted with MILAN anti-tank missiles. It is also capable of towing artillery pieces.

The P4 was jointly designed by Peugeot and Mercedes and was initially commissioned to replace 10,000 Jeeps in the French Army



The optical telegraph discouraged enemy units by visibly demonstrating that Legion battalions could constantly communicate with each other

OPTICAL TELEGRAPH

When the Legion was campaigning in Africa and Asia between 1880-1914 the most common means of communication between French battalions in the field was the 'optical telegraph'. This was a system of boxed petrol lamps that had powerful lenses and large telescopes. Morse signals could be flashed and seen for many miles, with chain relay stations sending quick messages over hundreds of miles. They were even favoured over wire telegraphs as there were no wires for enemy soldiers to cut.

MILAN ANTI-TANK WEAPON

The MILAN (Missile Léger Antichar NATO) is an anti-tank light guided missile. It has been used by the Foreign Legion since the mid-1970s and is operated by two crew members: a gunner, who carries the firing post; and a loader, who carries two missiles. The missiles have a range of up to 2,000 metres and can travel at speeds of 75 metres per second.



The MILAN was co-designed by the French and German armies and is in service in 41 countries

VBCI (VÉHICULE DE COMBAT D'INFANTRIE)

The VBCI is an 8x8 infantry combat armoured vehicle. It is one of the most recent additions to the Legion's armoury, having entered service in 2015. With an operational range of 750 kilometres and

a top speed of 100 kilometres per hour, it is designed to transport soldiers across various terrains at high velocity. It can carry nine troops and is fitted with a 7.62mm machine gun and a 25-millimetre cannon that can engage low-flying helicopters.

Before entering service with the Foreign Legion, the VBCI had already been deployed by the French Army in Lebanon, Afghanistan and Mali



The ERC-90 is fully amphibious, without the need for preparation

PANHARD ERC-90 F4 SAGAIE

The ERC-90 (Engin de Reconnaissance Cannon) is a six-wheeled armoured, all-terrain, fully amphibious vehicle. Armed with a 90 millimetre cannon, it has been used by the Legion since the 1980s. Although its armour can only protect its crew from small-arms fire, the ERC-90's light weight enables it to travel at speeds of up to 90 kilometres per hour and at a range of 700 kilometres.

"THE ERC-90'S LIGHT WEIGHT ENABLES IT TO TRAVEL UP TO 90 KILOMETRES PER HOUR"

HEROES OF THE LEGION

Hailing from nations across the world, these men found both glory and brotherhood in the ranks

JEAN DANJOU

YEARS ACTIVE: 1849-1863

NATIONALITY: FRENCH

Born in Chalabre, France in 1828, Jean Danjou would go on to enrol at École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr, the foremost military training academy in France. After graduating as a 2nd lieutenant at the age of 20, Danjou was assigned to the 51st Regiment of the Line and began his military career proper.

After serving for four years, Danjou was transferred to the 2nd Foreign Regiment and was shipped out to assist French colonisation efforts in Algeria. In 1853, he was part of a mapping team sent to determine the layout of the mountainous setting. The area had resisted French invasion and the Legion faced combat at every turn. While in the middle of a skirmish, his firearm misfired causing it to explode, destroying his left hand.

Rather than ending his career, Danjou's dedication to the Legion and his brother legionnaires saw him adopt a wooden hand and continued to serve in the field. On 24 December 1853, he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

He would go on to serve in the Crimean War against Russia and fight in the bloody Siege of Sevastopol in 1854. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in June 1855 while the battle was still raging. Danjou's steadfast fighting spirit would see him take part in the Austro-Sardinian War in 1859 where he served in the Battles of Magenta and Solferino.

After spending the following years in Morocco, Danjou would follow his fellow legionnaires to Mexico and it would be here that his exploits would become legend. As the leader of 62 soldiers, Danjou would die defending a ruined hacienda against 3,000 Mexican soldiers at Camarón. His wooden hand became the Legion's most revered totem and his actions earned him immortality in the annals of the its history.



Danjou's legacy would see his wooden hand paraded every year on the 30 April to celebrate Camerone Day

Left: Despite his premature death, Faber remains one of the Tour De France's most celebrated icons



COUNT AAGE OF ROSENBERG

YEARS ACTIVE: 1922-1940

NATIONALITY: DANISH

The eldest son of Prince Valdemar of Denmark, Aage Christian Alexander Robert was a charismatic royal from the House of Glücksburg. He joined the Danish Army in 1909 and fought in World War I, reaching the rank of Captain on his return to Denmark.

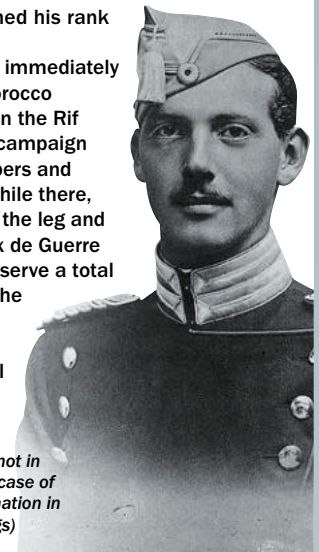
After choosing to marry without his father's permission, Aage soon renounced his title of Prince and formally removed himself from the line of succession.

In an unusual move, Prince Valdemar agreed to allow his son to leave the Danish Army to join the French Foreign Legion, and after long negotiations between the Danish and French governments he entered the

Legion and retained his rank of Captain.

He was almost immediately shipped off to Morocco where he fought in the Rif War (a territorial campaign between the Berbers and Spain/France). While there, Aage was shot in the leg and received the Croix de Guerre medal. He would serve a total of 17 years with the Legion, attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel and the Légion d'honneur.

Aage died in 1940, not in combat, but from a case of pleurisy (an inflammation in the lining of the lungs)



FRANÇOIS FABER

YEARS ACTIVE: 1914-1915 **NATIONALITY:** LUXEMBOURGIAN

Before joining the Legion at the outbreak of WWI, François Faber had made his name as one of the best riders in professional and competitive cycling. Born in France, but raised in Luxembourg, he became the first non-Frenchman to win the famous Tour De France competition in 1909.

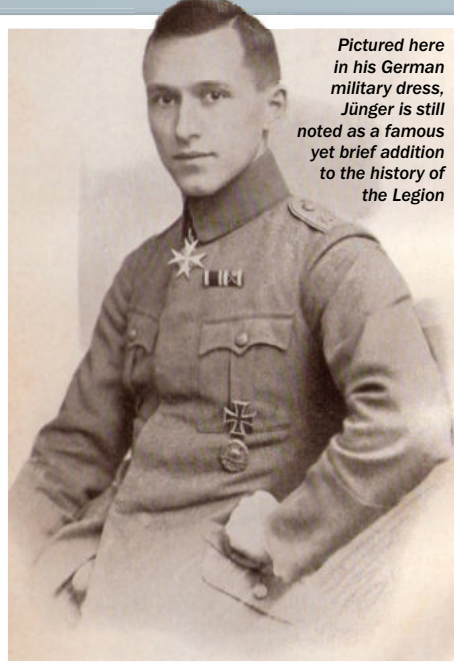
Unable to join the French Army, Faber enlisted in the French Foreign Legion in 1914 and was assigned to the 2nd Régiment de Marche of the 1st FFL, based out of Bayonne in the south-west of France. By the end of 1914, he had already been promoted to the rank of corporal and on 9 May 1915 (the first day of the Battle of Artois), received a telegram informing him that his wife had given birth to a baby daughter. He was shot dead while carrying a fellow injured legionnaire to safety the very same day.

ERNST JÜNGER

YEARS ACTIVE: 1913-1914
NATIONALITY: GERMAN

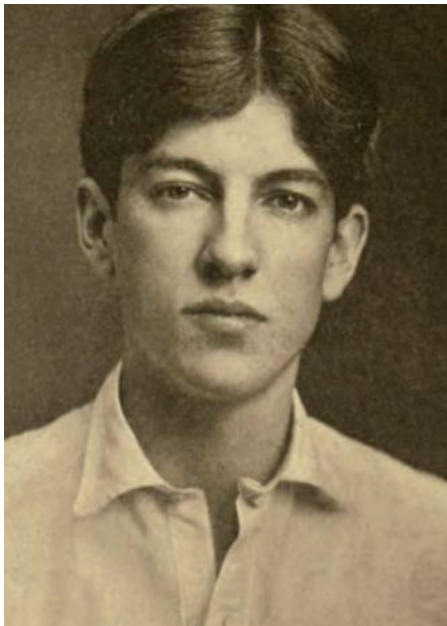
Despite being one of the Foreign Legion's most famous recruits – his later novels are still hailed as some of the best war fiction ever written – German born Ernst Jünger only spent around two months as a legionnaire. Having run away from home in November 1913, the young Jünger made a beeline for the French Foreign Legion recruitment office in Verdun and was signed up for a minimum of five years service.

He was shipped off to an FFL training camp in Sidi Bel Abbès, Algeria, but almost immediately went AWOL and crossed the border into Morocco. The Legion soon caught up to him and he was returned to camp, but the issue didn't end there. It turned out Jünger was a minor so his release from the Legion was eventually negotiated by the German government. He would go on to serve in the German military during World War I but would reject the advances of the Reich at the outbreak of the next global conflict.



Pictured here in his German military dress, Jünger is still noted as a famous yet brief addition to the history of the Legion

“SEEGER WAS CUT DOWN BY MACHINE GUN FIRE. ACCORDING TO RECORDS, HE CHEERED ON HIS FELLOW LEGIONNAIRES EVEN AFTER BEING HIT BEFORE SUCCUMBING HIS WOUNDS”



ALAN SEEGER

YEARS ACTIVE: 1914-1916
NATIONALITY: AMERICAN

Born in New York in 1888, Alan Seeger grew up with a fascination for creative writing and poetry and would eventually go on to study at Harvard University. With his classmates including future literary stars such as TS Eliot and Walter Lippmann, Seeger would next move to Paris, settling in the Latin Quarter as his search for poetic inspiration grew.

When WWI broke out, Seeger was compelled to serve – however, since the United States didn't enter the war until 1917, he chose to join the Legion instead. After a mere two years serving, he became a casualty during the Battle of the Somme. While fighting at the French commune of Belloy-en-Santerre, Seeger was cut down by machine gun fire. According to records, he cheered on his fellow Legionnaires even after being hit before succumbing his wounds.

Many of Seeger's poems were published posthumously, and a number of them shared the theme of dying young and gloriously

PIERRE MESSMER

YEARS ACTIVE: 1939-1945
NATIONALITY: FRENCH

Pierre Joseph Auguste Messmer joined the French Foreign Legion in 1939 following the Battle of France. Refusing to accept his nation's capitulation to the Third Reich, he fled to London and was assigned to the Legion's 13th Demi-Brigade. So began an illustrious career that would place him in combat in Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Egypt (including fighting in the Battle of Bir Hakeim, the Tunisia Campaign and the Battle

of El Alamein). He would then fight during the Normandy Landings in 1944 and the Liberation of Paris.

Following his time in the Legion, Messmer's career would start a new chapter in politics and it would be there that he'd make his most significant contribution to France. Identifying as a 'Gaullist' (a form of patriotic French politics), Messmer would go on to serve as Minister of Armies from 1960 to 1969, then as Prime Minister from 1972 to 1974.

SIMON MURRAY

YEARS ACTIVE: 1960-1965
NATIONALITY: BRITISH



Murray would go on to recount his experiences fighting in the Algerian War with his book 'Legionnaire'

Born into a family with established military history, Murray was destined to serve in the armed forces one way or another. At the age of 20, he joined the Legion and began a five-year-long career that would see him join the 2nd Foreign Parachute Regiment. While serving as a Legionnaire, he was sent to North Africa to fight in the Algerian War – a conflict that would eventually lead to Algeria gaining independence from France.

After serving his minimum five year contract, he turned down the opportunity to attend officer school and chose to pursue a career elsewhere. He moved to Hong Kong where he successfully started investment companies, project advisory firms and the telecommunications company Orange (which he eventually sold for \$33 billion). He also became the oldest man to reach the South Pole unsupported at the age of 63.



Messmer's Gaullist leanings would be tempered by his time spent in the military

Images: Alamy, Getty

HEAD TO HEAD

During the ill-fated French intervention of 1861-67, the Legion's elite faced off against a substantial Mexican army



Above: Members of the FFL from Senegal, Equatorial Africa and Madagascar

AN ARMY OF MERCENARIES

Unlike almost any other military fighting force in the world, the French Foreign Legion is comprised almost entirely of non-French citizens (although French citizens could enrol, but only as officers). Recruits could be from any other country, religion or background – and even criminals and ex-convicts were known to join in order to escape the sins of an old life. Such requirements are a little stricter now, but the same principles of enlistment still apply. This includes having to travel to France to join at one of the recruitment centres in person and signing up for a minimum of five years service.

LEGIONNAIRE

LOYALTY: FRANCE YEARS IN OPERATION: 1831-PRESENT

MELEE SKILLS

DRAW

When it came to wielding a blade, the French Foreign legionnaire was no stranger. Most carried a bayonet on the end of their rifle, while officers often carried ceremonial swords. Pioneers (or 'sappers') also carried axes to clear away enemy obstacles.

MARKSMANSHIP

Legionnaires were expert marksman, trained to fire in a variety of harsh environments, both in formation and on-the-fly. That skill extended not just to the use of ranged and short arms, but siege cannons and other artillery too.

MORALE

The legionnaires prided themselves on being expendable. They were sent to the fiercest battle zones and expected to die, paving the way for the regular French Army. These troops would often fight to the last man, giving their grit an almost mystical property.

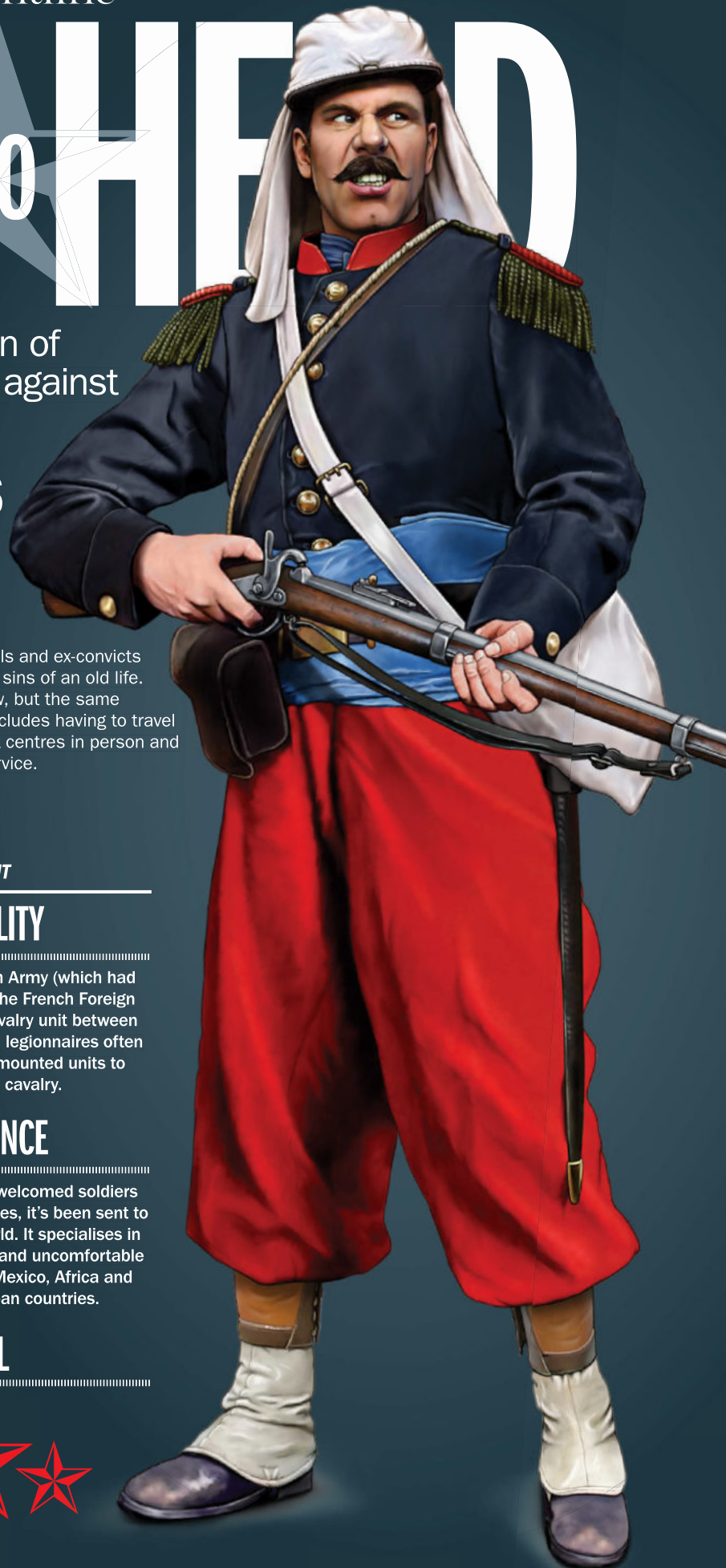
FLEXIBILITY

Unlike the regular French Army (which had plenty of cavalry units), the French Foreign Legion was missing a cavalry unit between 1815 and 1921. As such, legionnaires often went to battle without mounted units to counter enemy cavalry.

EXPERIENCE

Not only has the Legion welcomed soldiers from 140 different countries, it's been sent to war zones across the world. It specialises in working out of hot, dusty and uncomfortable environments, such as Mexico, Africa and several Mediterranean countries.

TOTAL





Above: Some losses, such as that suffered by Mexico at the Battle of Monterrey, galvanised the nation into using more aggressive tactics

A NATION AT WAR

Mexico might be free of military campaigns in the modern age, but back in the 1800s the nation found itself battling to survive against enemies on multiple fronts. After fighting for independence from Spain at the turn of the century, Mexico then found itself battling a French Intervention with the Pastry War (1838-39), then with the United States in the Mexican-American War (1846-48). Had Spain, the US and Britain remained on the offensive alongside France, Mexico may have been squashed, but with superior numbers on their side, the Mexican Army would eventually drive Napoleon III's forces out of the country.

“THE MEXICAN ARMY USED ARMS LEFT OVER FROM THE SPANISH OCCUPATION AND THOSE BOUGHT FROM THE BRITISH”

MEXICAN REGULAR

LOYALTY: MEXICO YEARS IN OPERATION: 1810-PRESENT

MELEE SKILLS

DRAW

Mexican soldiers often fought with United States-style sabres and more traditional short swords (which had shorter, broader blades). They also fought with bayonets at close quarters.

FLEXIBILITY



The Mexican army had a significant cavalry presence, so the traditional ranchero or charro would be skilled in both riding a horse in battle and firing a rifle while on horseback.

MARKSMANSHIP



The Mexican army used arms left over from the Spanish occupation and those bought from the British – however, light infantry often used smaller and less effective rifles requiring a closer range.

EXPERIENCE



The Mexican regular was no stranger to conflict, having fought for independence at the beginning of the century and in the first French Intervention, otherwise known as the Pastry War, in Mexico.

MORALE



The Mexican regular would have been a seasoned fighter, but the FFL soldier would have been like a force of nature with their almost ‘demonic’ refusal to give quarter or offer surrender.

TOTAL



BATTLE OF CAMARÓN

30 APRIL 1863

The legacy and mystique of the French Foreign Legion is forged when a small contingent of legionnaires refused to surrender to the Mexican army

During the French Intervention in Mexico – where Napoleon III's France invaded the South American state due to suspended interest payments – a convoy consisting of 3 million francs in gold bullion, a set of siege guns and sixty wagons of ammunition was sent to reinforce the French war effort. Two companies of fusiliers were ordered to accompany it, while the 3rd Company of the 1st Battalion of the Foreign Legion was sent to scout the road ahead for Mexican ambushes.

On the 30 April 1863, that company, led by adjutant major of the 1st Battalion, Captain Jean Danjou, was two hours ahead of the main force when Indian spies brought word of Mexican cavalry waiting in the wings...

“REALISING THAT HIS FORCES WILL LIKELY NOT SURVIVE THE COMING OFFENSIVE, DANJOU GETS EVERY SINGLE ONE OF HIS MEN TO SWEAR ALLEGIANCE ON HIS WOODEN HAND”

1. THE MEXICAN AMBUSH BEGINS

Two hours ahead of a large convoy of French guns, ammunition and bullion, French legionnaires of 3rd Company, 1st Battalion are scouting the route ahead. While breaking for coffee at 8.00am, Captain Jean Danjou is informed of an impending Mexican cavalry attack and orders his men to return fire on the 250 riders.

2. CAPTURE AND RETREAT

The legionnaire force, numbering 62 men and three officers, is being overrun by 250 Mexican cavalry and hundreds more infantry. Realising his men will be cut down in the open, Danjou orders them to retreat to the square hacienda sighted at an earlier point in their march. They form into a 'hollow square' to cover their retreating brothers, but 16 are captured.

3. MEXICAN SNIPERS AT THE HACIENDA

With the convoy now returning to safety following news of the attack on the scout party, Danjou leads his men to the hacienda but finds a nest of Mexican snipers picking his men off. They eventually drive the snipers out and take refuge within the walls of the abandoned and partially ruined fort.

4. CAMARÓN IS SURROUNDED

By this stage, Danjou intends to keep the bulk of the Mexican attention on him and his small contingent of legionnaires (and away from the convoy). He positions his men around the hacienda, and with the cover of the crumbling walls his men are able to inflict considerable damage on the Mexican forces.

5. SWEARING ALLEGIANCE ON DANJOU'S HAND

Realising that his forces will likely not survive the coming offensive, Danjou gets every single one of his men to swear allegiance on his wooden hand (he lost his hand in a previous battle) and opens their last bottle of wine. They ready themselves for a Mexican charge.

6. DANJOU REJECTS THE OFFER TO SURRENDER

Despite expecting a full on assault, the Mexicans approach the legionnaires under a white flag and explain that they'll be wiped out if they don't offer their surrender. Danjou refuses to accept defeat and tells the Mexican emissary he and his men have enough ammunition to hold them off.

7. DANJOU FALLS AS THE MEXICANS CHARGE

The Mexican force, now swollen to 3,000 men following the arrival of more reinforcements, charges the hacienda with full force on the east and south sides. The legionnaires manage to hold off the charge, but they lose many men, including Danjou himself. Rattled, the legionnaires refuse to give in.

8. NO SURRENDER

The Mexicans cease-fire and approach the hacienda, yet again requesting that the legionnaires surrender and avoid further bloodshed. The Foreign Legion soldiers are out of food and water, but they once again refuse. Around 1,200 Mexican infantry have surrounded the hacienda, while the legionnaires are down to 32 men.

9. THE LEGIONNAIRES DROP LIKE FLIES

By around 2.00pm, exhausted, stricken with sunstroke and running low on ammunition, only 20 of the legionnaires are even able to continue fighting. The Mexicans even stop their assault to request another surrender. Again the white flagged gesture is rejected, even with the legionnaires on the point of collapse.

10. FINAL CHARGE AND CEASE-FIRE

By 5.30pm, only five legionnaires remain. Their ammunition has run out, but they refuse to give in. Bayonets and sabres at the ready, the five men charge from the hacienda and head straight for the bulk of the Mexican forces. Two of the charging men are cut down, and the remaining three are eventually forced to surrender.

THE LEGACY OF THE BATTLE OF CAMARÓN

THE LAST STAND OF JUST OVER 70 LEGIONNAIRES CREATED A MYSTIQUE THAT WOULD CALCIFY THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION'S REPUTATION

In no uncertain words, the Battle of Camarón soon became French Foreign Legion's version of the Alamo. The defiance of those few soldiers in the face of 3,000 Mexican foes became the stuff of legend, forming the very crux of the Legion's stout and hardy attitude. The French intervention in Mexico ultimately became a disaster. France's desire to occupy the country fell apart once Britain, Spain and the US pulled out of the offensive. This considered, the fact the battle remains a point of pride for the French national identity proves its lasting significance.

Captain Jean Danjou has become a legend himself in the Legion. His wooden hand, upon which his men swore allegiance under waves of Mexican fire, has become the most revered relic in the branch of the French Army. Every year on the 30 April for 'Camerone Day', the hand is taken on parade.

The event also holds a special significance within the Mexican military. Every year – on the same day as the celebration in France – the Mexican government holds special ceremonies at the site of the battle, with French legionnaire representatives usually in attendance. Mexican soldiers passing through the area turn to salute at the monument.



In Aubagne, the Camerone Day celebrations culminate with the wooden hand of Capt Jean Danjou being carried on parade



GOOSE GREEN

WORDS TOM GARNER

Outnumbered British paratroopers face off against entrenched Argentinian machine guns, in the first land battle of the Falklands War

FALKLAND ISLANDS, 28 MAY 1982

Deep in the South Atlantic lies a cluster of sparsely populated, windswept islands. For many years, the Falklands were a forgotten corner of Britain's once vast colonial empire. Located over 8,000 miles away, much of the UK's population were even unaware of its existence. All that was to change on 2 April 1982 when Argentina invaded and occupied the islands, much to the distress of the largely British population. Three days later, a British Task Force was dispatched to retake the islands and, on 21 May, 4,000 men of 3 Commando Brigade landed at San Carlos Water on the west coast of East Falkland.

500 of these soldiers belonged to the 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment – commonly known as '2 Para' – elite troops under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Jones, known to his men as 'H'. Under him were four companies of 100-130 men each, named A, B, C and D. The commander of D Company was a 36-year-old major called Philip Neame. Shortly after arriving on East Falkland, Neame was far from encouraged by the "cold, wet and boggy" surroundings. After landing at San Carlos, 2 Para had to ascend Sussex Mountain in order to secure the beachhead, before making their way to the next objective: Goose Green.

Difficult preparations

Goose Green is the third largest settlement on the Falkland Islands, positioned on a narrow isthmus connecting the north and south portions of East Falkland. The Argentinians were in control of an airstrip at this position and had placed 1,200 troops there to protect it. If left unchecked, this enemy stronghold would threaten the British advance towards the capital of Stanley, on the east coast of the island.

Fresh off the boat, Neame and his men immediately encountered problems while climbing Sussex Mountain. "We were carrying 80-120 pounds of ammunition. Trying to get up onto the hill was a complete nightmare. It

OPPOSING FORCES



BRITISH
LEADER

Lieutenant Colonel
Herbert 'H' Jones
INFANTRY 500 men
of 2nd Battalion
Parachute Regiment

VS



ARGENTINIAN
LEADER

Lieutenant Colonel
Ítalo Piaggi
INFANTRY 1,000 men
of 12th Infantry
Regiment

A soldier mans a machine gun overlooking San Carlos Water

"WE WERE WATCHING THE ROYAL NAVY BEING PROGRESSIVELY SUNK BELOW US. I THINK PEOPLE WERE THINKING: 'FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE THIS ISN'T GOING AS IT SHOULD BE!'"

was really "atrocious going and we began to accept that the boots we had weren't up to the job. The old boots were soaking up the water like blotting paper and within a few days people were beginning to suffer from trench foot. On Sussex Mountain itself, we were sitting effectively on a peat bog. It was like the Crimea, sitting in these pretty dire conditions for five days." Worse still, the men were soon helpless observers as British ships were attacked by wave after wave of enemy fast jets. "We were watching the Royal Navy being progressively sunk below us. I think people were thinking: 'For heaven's sake this isn't going as it should be!'"

To capture Goose Green, the British needed a secure command centre, which was remotely located at Camilla Creek House, nearly 20 kilometres south of Sussex Mountain. "We were the nearest battalion to Goose Green and the furthest away from Stanley," Neame remembers. "On 26 May I was given orders by

'H' [Colonel Jones] to go and secure Camilla Creek as an assembly area. This was the second time we'd been given the task, having already ridden halfway there before and the mission had been cancelled. I effectively led the battalion into Camilla Creek. It was a farmhouse with a few outbuildings. It was the first shelter we'd seen for a week or so. We piled in there. The rest of the battalion came in behind us expecting to find some room. It did get very crowded; one of my platoons was crammed into the downstairs loo!"

During the night spent at Camilla Creek, the BBC World Service – which was closely reporting on the war – accidentally made life

even more difficult for 2 Para. "In the middle of the night we picked up that the BBC had rather cleverly announced to the world that there was now a parachute battalion within a few miles of Goose Green. It didn't specifically give away our position but it wasn't going to take the brains of a bishop to work out where we might be. 'H' quite sensibly gave the order at first light to disperse into the peat."

Although the BBC's announcement inadvertently gave the Argentinians extra preparation time, Neame doesn't entirely blame the renowned broadcasters. "It was actually reporting an announcement made in Parliament, so perhaps it's not fair to put the

"ON SUSSEX MOUNTAIN ITSELF, WE WERE SITTING EFFECTIVELY ON A PEAT BOG. IT WAS LIKE THE CRIMEA, SITTING IN THESE PRETTY DIRE CONDITIONS FOR FIVE DAYS"

entire blame on the BBC but on Parliamentary procedure as well. The government was under fairly desperate pressure to let the public know that things were happening and we were going to go on the offensive."

The announcement also changed the tone of the upcoming fight for the men of 2 Para, adding a new level of pressure to their operation. "It was going to be the first major all-arm attack at night since Korea that the British Army had been engaged in, so there was a certain amount of apprehension. That was obviously increased by the BBC's announcement. When you looked at the ground, a narrow isthmus didn't allow much room for manoeuvre. It was initially described as a 'raid' on Goose Green but over time the mission got elevated to 'recovering the settlement'".

Despite this elevation, the Paratroopers were short on air and artillery support thanks to Argentinian air attacks on the supply ships in San Carlos. "We went out with half a battery of guns when normally we'd expect a full battery and when you haven't got the helicopters to hand out the ammunition there's no point using

"IT WAS INITIALLY DESCRIBED AS A 'RAID' ON GOOSE GREEN BUT OVER TIME THE MISSION GOT ELEVATED TO 'RECOVERING THE SETTLEMENT'"



D Company aboard MV Norland in May 1982. Phil Neame is located in the middle of the back row. Three more companies of this size was the entire strength of the British force at Goose Green.

the guns either." Neame recalls there was little complacency. "I remember my sergeant-major saying before the battle, 'This is going to be a hard knock on the door and they'll collapse.' And I remember saying, 'Well it might just be that but if not then it's going to be a bloody hard day!'"

For many in 2 Para, the coming fight would be their first experience of battle, including Neame: "For most people it was certainly the first time. Most people in the battalion had Northern Ireland experience, but that is not in any sense comparable with an all-arms battle. I had Northern Ireland experience and one of our company commanders had extensive experience of all-arms fighting in the Dhofar War in Oman in the early Seventies. I'd been involved on the edges of that so I had some experience of engagement but not of the intensity that were about to encounter."

First shots

On paper, the odds were unfavourable for 2 Para; outnumbered two-to-one by up to 800 enemy combatants on the ground, with 1,200 close by in reserve. The Argentinian infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Ítalo Piaggi, had dug themselves in well, forming a line of entrenched machine-gun positions on Darwin Hill. This position was 30 metres high and overlooked both its namesake settlement and beyond, Goose Green itself. This posed a formidable obstacle for the British to overcome. To take it on, 2 Para would begin their assault in the dark, supported by naval fire from the Royal Navy.

On 28 May at 3.35am, HMS Arrow opened up a salvo of shellfire on the Argentinian positions, while 2 Para cautiously crept forward under the cover of darkness, stumbling over the soggy and featureless ground of the isthmus. A

Moving into the Falklands: soldiers aboard the HMS Hermes prepare to transfer to other ships for deployment



THE ARGENTINE ARMY

BATTLING THE COLD AND HUNGER, ARGENTINIAN CONSCRIPTS FACED SEASONED BRITISH PARATROOPERS



Soldiers carrying FN FAL rifles, MAG58 machine guns and 90mm recoilless rifles

The defenders of Goose Green were principally drawn from the Argentine Army's 12th Infantry Regiment, over two-thirds comprised of young conscripts serving their year's national service, most with less than a month's military training.

They were poorly equipped, without suitable cold weather clothing, and were plagued by food shortages. Compounding this, the Argentine officer class was known as inefficient and unprofessional, with many political appointees. Worse, conscripts feared non-commissioning officers for their brutality toward junior soldiers.

Despite this, and a noted lack of cohesion in comparison with the well-trained British forces, some elements of the 12th Infantry fought with distinction at Goose Green. The Argentine soldiers showed a considerable understanding of the terrain they were fighting on, with well-sited machine gun, anti-aircraft weaponry and infantry fighting positions that would prove costly for the British attackers. Although many of the conscripts were hesitant during the battle and played little part in the final outcome, others fought courageously.

"THE ARGENTINES SHOWED A CONSIDERABLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERRAIN WITH WELL-SITED MACHINE GUNS, ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONRY AND INFANTRY FIGHTING POSITIONS"

The Argentine defenders were also well armed with ten FN MAG general purpose machine guns, a .50 Browning heavy machine gun, three recoilless rifles, a number of 81mm and 120mm mortars and a battery of three 105mm howitzers firing in direct support. Additionally, an Argentine Air Force unit equipped with two 35mm and six 20mm anti-aircraft cannon had been repositioned to fire against ground targets.

The Argentines had very little advance warning of the operation to retake Goose Green

and Darwin, but were expecting an attack from the direction of San Carlos, dangerously overextending their defences. Incredibly, the British Defence Secretary announced in Parliament that 2 Para were advancing on Goose Green, before the battle.

His announcement was quickly picked up by the BBC World Service. The Argentines thankfully dismissed his claim as strategic misdirection, incredulous that the British would be so stupid as to announce their intentions in such a manner.

Argentine soldiers dig in and position a 120mm mortar in the Falklands, possibly close to Goose Green



Company approached Burntside House at the north-east end of the isthmus believing it to be occupied by Argentine soldiers. However, on arrival they found there were only four unhurt civilians. At 4.10am, B Company advanced down the right flank of the isthmus with D Company following them along the middle ground. At this early stage, Neame felt the battle was going well. "I have to say that every night engagement, and there had been two or three before daylight emerged, we were going through them like butter. They were not really trained or experienced in that sort of condition. A lot of the Argentinians were hiding at the bottom of their trenches with their sleeping bags over their heads. It was almost as though they were wishing they weren't there."

However, before long HMS Arrow suffered a mechanical failure with its guns and the Paratroopers lost their fire support. Worse still, the four companies were losing contact with one another in the darkness, which became a serious problem towards dawn. "It started to get difficult at daylight. What had gone wrong was that after an attack, the time taken to reorganise was much longer than we had been expecting," Neame recalls. "It was very dark and people were being pulled in every direction. The whole reorganisation was a

complete nightmare. We should have been at the settlements by daylight and by daylight we were barely a third of the way there. As soon as daylight came up, the boot went completely on the Argentinian foot because of the huge streams of fire in very open countryside. That was when life became seriously difficult..."

In fact, 2 Para's problems had already begun during the night including for Neame's D Company on the right flank of the British line. "We had four casualties in our first attack," explains Neame, "it was utter confusion. We were opened up on by several machine guns. These positions were between where I was then and B Company's position. We had to get through them to get to B Company; I mean it was complete chaos! My control was then frankly minimal, you had to rely on the initiatives of platoon commanders to try and decide what you were trying to deal with."

'H' Jones

As Neame's men struggled with the disorientating contact with the enemy, other companies began experiencing difficulties of their own. Both flanks of paratroopers slowed their advance. To the west B Company came up against the Argentine fortified position at Boca House and D Company became engaged in a series of confused clashes with entrenched enemy positions. A Company also found itself pinned down by sniper and machine gun fire from Darwin Hill. Trapped and exposed in the open, paratroopers began to fall to the relentless gunfire one after another.

Monitoring the events as they unfolded from his base of operations, Colonel Jones became increasingly frustrated with how slowly the battle was progressing. He moved to join A Company on the left-most British flank, to take a more direct involvement in the fight, declaring: "Right, I'm not having this!" and moved his ten-man tactical team along the edge of the Darwin inlet before sheltering in a gully near the Argentine positions. The enemy machine guns were positioned in a jagged pattern along the hill, giving the defenders a broad line of sight and making a paratrooper advance nearly impossible.

Concerned that the element of surprise had been lost and that the British were losing the initiative, Jones took a desperately courageous action. At approximately 9.30am, armed with a sub-machine gun and calling on his men to follow him, he charged the nearest enemy position. Unfortunately, in the confusion of battle, Jones's command went largely unheard and he charged the Argentinians alone while firing his gun. He was mortally wounded just metres from his target. With their commanding officer down, A Company continued to fire on the entrenched positions but 20 minutes were

Royal Marines in Ajax Bay waiting to go on patrol



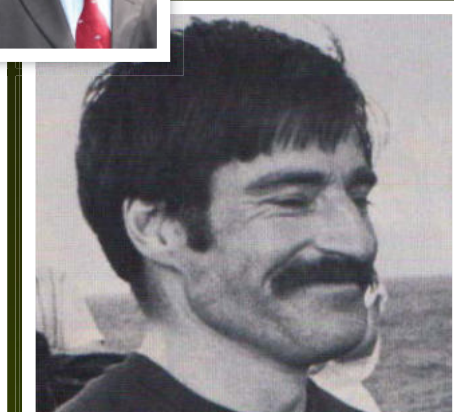
PHILIP NEAME

THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF D COMPANY, 2 PARA, DURING THE BATTLE

After service in Northern Ireland Phil Neame commanded D Company as a Major in 2 Para during the Falklands War. He was mentioned in dispatches during the conflict for his actions. From 1990-92 he commanded 10 Para in the Territorial Army. He retired from the army in 1994 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel after 20 years in the Parachute Regiment and six years in the RAF Regiment. Since then Neame founded and is a trustee for the Ulysses Trust.

In 2014 he was awarded the Points of Light Award by Prime Minister David Cameron for his outstanding contributions to volunteering.

Phil Neame in 1982 and (inset, left) today



"IT WAS VERY DARK AND PEOPLE WERE BEING PULLED IN EVERY DIRECTION. THE WHOLE REORGANISATION WAS A COMPLETE NIGHTMARE"

“TRAPPED AND EXPOSED IN THE OPEN, PARATROOPERS BEGAN TO FALL TO THE RELENTLESS GUNFIRE ONE AFTER ANOTHER”

‘H’ JONES

2 PARA'S COMMANDING OFFICER LED FROM THE FRONT, BUT PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE

The circumstances around Jones's death have since aroused controversy and criticism in some quarters, with some arguing that he should not have charged alone and left his men without their commanding officer. However Neame's assessment of the man reveals a sometimes difficult but ultimately exceptional officer: "I think everyone acknowledged that he wasn't the easiest person to work with, he was very volatile but he could also be very warm, very thoughtful."

Jones was a stubborn man, but would listen to suggestions. "I remember he gave one instruction: we were going to fight this the modern way, there'd be no need for bayonets. My Toms [British Army slang for 'soldier'] were most upset at the thought they wouldn't be able to take their bayonets. The only way I could persuade him was to say, 'They really want them as tin openers.' That was laughable but it gave him the room to back down gracefully. So he said, 'Well alright then if they want them as tin openers take them!' So you had to manage him a bit but he really was a most aggressive, mission-focussed officer."

Neame is clear that Jones's leadership was vital to the course of the battle: "His contribution, in my view, was before the battle. He absolutely got this battalion thinking, 'Nothing is going to stop us,' to the level of complete faith that we were going to overcome all odds and difficulties. It must have been a pretty testing moment. Showing courage in the heat of battle is one thing, keeping calm in the moments before is much more demanding in many ways. He must have been feeling pretty queasy on occasions but if he did he didn't show it. In this sense he showed real leadership, just instilling us with complete faith that we were going to do it."

For Neame, Jones's actions were typical behaviour: "A lot has been said about his involvement around A Company and the manner of his death and I suppose the trouble is that was the sort of chap he was. To him there was only one way of leading and that was leading from the front. He wouldn't ask the Toms to do something that he wasn't prepared to do himself. I think in retrospect it was a mistake, he got himself too involved in A Company's battle which meant he lost the overall perspective of the battlefield. I think that's what was going wrong but it was totally in the character of the man."

When Neame heard about Jones's wounding, he took the news pragmatically. "No one's jaw dropped. You didn't read, 'Commander of the battalion is dead, battle shattered.' Nothing like that happened because we all knew 'H'; he was a very visible man. What you saw was what you got. The fact that he had died in this way I don't think was a great surprise. I think everyone was saying, 'The old bugger's going to get it one time'. People took that very much in their stride."

This memorial marks the spot where H. Jones fell



to pass before help was able to reach Jones, who subsequently died of his wounds. For his actions, he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

While all this was happening, the emergence of daylight allowed the Argentinians to fly in reinforcements using helicopters and to harass any British air attempts to assist 2 Para. For example, a Royal Marine Scout helicopter was shot down by Pucaras aircraft while it was on its way to rescue the mortally wounded Jones.

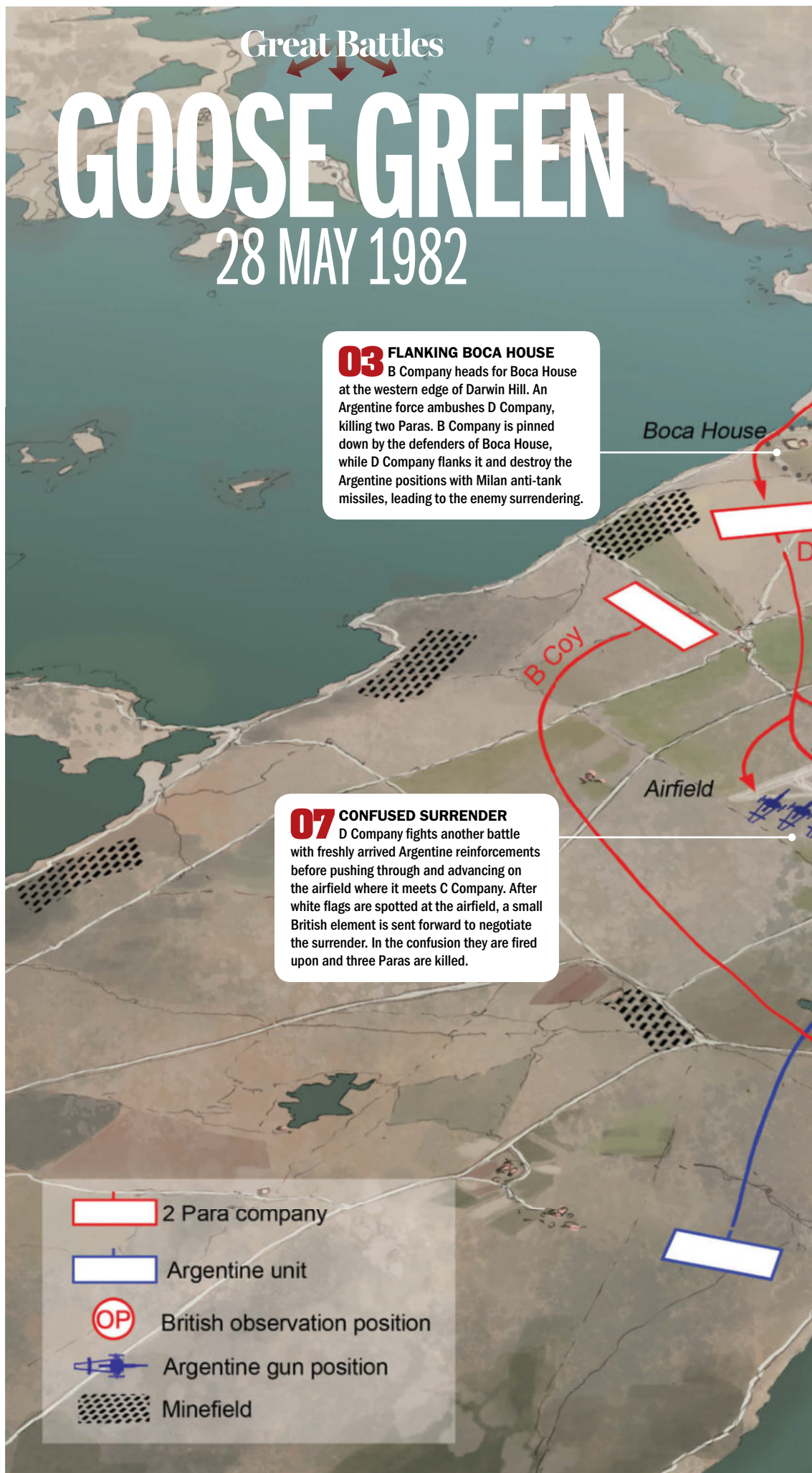
The lieutenant-colonel's death increased the urgency that Darwin Hill had to be taken quickly. In an attempt to dislodge the Argentinians from their superior positions, Corporal David Abols crept up and fired two rocket-propelled grenades at the command bunker. Despite bullets raining down around him, Abols scored a direct hit. This action led to the capture of Darwin Hill and many Argentinians surrendered. For his bravery Abols was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Jones's actions altered Neame's decisions for D Company: "The impact for me was that I decided that nothing was going to happen while all this head-butting operation around Darwin Hill with A Company and the Argentinians was going on. That was going to take a while, in my book. I'd taken the view that nothing was going to be coming my way for probably an hour and I told the company to 'get a brew on'."

What this meant was the unusual sight of D Company having breakfast on the battlefield. "It's not the sort of thing you'd be encouraged to do. It'd be seen as [being] a bit cavalier about things but in my view this was now going to be a very long day and we hadn't eaten since 12 hours previously. It struck me as being the most useful thing that I could actually do to make sure there was going to be enough in the body to keep us going for a battle that was going to last until the end of the day as far as I could see."

Despite the need to re-fuel, Neame soon found that feeding his men became a secondary priority. "I got a brew of porridge on and that was the difficulty. Just as we got the announcement 'H' was down, the porridge had just come to the boil. I was just about to have my first mouthful and Chris Keeble [Major Christopher Keeble who had taken over command of 2 Para after H Jones's death] got on the net and said 'Try and join B Company' and suddenly what I thought was going to be an hour of relative inactivity for our company was brought to an end." Some of Neame's men were initially perplexed by their officer's actions: "We were rather eating on the go, we must have looked a sight! I think one or two initially looked and thought, 'Hang on, has he lost the plot?' And then of course they realised, 'Actually, well why the hell not?' It made sense."

"A ROYAL MARINE SCOUT HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN BY PUCARAS AIRCRAFT WHILE IT WAS ON ITS WAY TO RESCUE THE MORTALLY WOUNDED JONES"



05 "SUNRAY IS DOWN"

A Company, now under Argentine artillery fire, fight their way forward, eliminating enemy positions by grenade and bayonet. Colonel H Jones, frustrated by the slow pace of the advance, leads a flanking movement and, caught in full daylight, is shot and killed. The message "Sunray is down" is broadcast.

01 START LINE

After walking through the night to arrive at their positions on time, the four companies of 2 Para prepare for the three-pronged assault to recapture the settlements of Darwin and Goose Green. They are supported by three 105mm howitzers, HMS Arrow's 4.5 inch gun and a flight of RAF GR3 Harriers.

02 ASSAULTING BURNTSIDE HOUSE

A Company advances upon Burntside House where faulty intelligence indicates there is an Argentine garrison. Planned naval gunfire support from HMS Arrow is aborted after her gun jams. After firing LAW rockets and posting grenades into the building, A Company discover no Argentine presence at Burntside House. Four civilians in the building escape unharmed.

04 PINNED AT CORONATION POINT

A Company secures Coronation Point, finding it deserted. With 3 Platoon providing fire support, the company advances on Darwin Hill. As dawn breaks, the Company headquarters and 1 Platoon are pinned down in the open by heavy fire. A request for support from the 105mm howitzers is denied citing 'friendly fire' concerns.

06 ADVANCE ON DARWIN

After finally securing Darwin Hill by trench clearing and use of rockets against Argentine bunkers, A Company takes up positions overlooking the Darwin settlement while C Company (Patrols), the battalion reserve, advances through A Company and down Darwin Hill toward Goose Green. Argentine AA guns at the airfield inflict several casualties.

08 BURNING THE SCHOOLHOUSE

D and C Company suffer an Argentine airstrike before assaulting the School House to the north of Goose Green, setting it alight with grenade launchers and rockets. An RAF airstrike against the Argentine AA guns at the airfield breaks the Argentine resolve and many of the defenders retreat into Goose Green.

09 Goose Green taken

Encircled by the Paras, an unconditional surrender is negotiated and over 1,000 prisoners are taken. The civilian population, held in the Community Centre, is released by the Paras. Goose Green itself is subsequently recaptured without a shot being fired. The enemy suffers 55 killed while 2 Para lose 15.

Boca House

It was now around midday. Darwin Hill had been taken and held by A Company and at the same time the fighting focussed around Argentinian positions at Boca House, a derelict farm west of Darwin Hill. B Company had been fighting near this position since dawn but had been forced to push back a little. In order to try and help B Company Boca House became D Company's new objective: "I tried to join B Company who were on the hill on the gorse line. We started attracting point-fire machine gun fire from the area, although I couldn't quite see it then," explains Neame. "So I decided it was pointless trying to find B Company because we'd end up pinned down on a forward slope. I pulled back and made my suggestion to Chris Keeble that it'd be worth seeing if we could do some outflanking along the western shoreline of the isthmus."

After finally linking up with B Company and obtaining a wire-guided anti-tank missile called a 'Milan', the British went on the attack. "We were able to set up a double act with the Milan blasting these five machine gun positions, not on Boca House but the feature above it. The

survivors tried to crawl out, and under cover we were able to engage with them. Within a short space of time the white flags started flying." Surrender was a preferable option for 2 Para. "We were thinking, 'If we can take the surrender it's going to save time but, more importantly, save very valuable ammunition,'" explains Neame. "The ammunition was restricted to what we could carry. I persuaded Keeble that if we don't make a decision soon we're going to be cut off by the tide, which was a complete figment really but it got a decision at least!"

The surrender itself was a tense moment as the British were unsure if they were being lured into a trap: "It was a very long ten minute walk over completely exposed ground, literally with our hearts in our mouths because in that situation you're never absolutely sure whether it's a real surrender. But we did get on it without the enemy opening up on us and there was a relative scene of destruction in front of us."

When D and B Company arrived to take the enemy surrender, they found a chaotic scene: "There was a lot of Argentinian injured; most of the prisoners had one sort of injury or another.

"AS WE LOOKED OUT TOWARDS GOOSE GREEN WE COULD SEE A SCORE OF ENEMY SOLDIERS HOT-LEGGING IT ACROSS THE AIRFIELD LITERALLY ON THE RUN LED BY SOMEBODY WE ASSUMED WAS THE COMPANY COMMANDER ON A TRACTOR"

OPERATION CORPORATE

BRITAIN'S LAST COLONIAL WAR, 8,000 MILES FROM HOME

The Argentine junta invaded the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982 in an effort to deflect domestic criticism of its regime. The sovereignty of Islas Malvinas, as they are known in Argentina, has long been disputed, although the Islanders themselves identify as British. On 5 April, Prime Minister Thatcher ordered a military task force to retake the islands by force.

With winter fast approaching, distance was not the sole challenge facing this task force, and, in addition, a rigid blockade of the islands was needed to isolate the Argentine forces. Incredibly, considering the scale of the undertaking, the task force sailed just three days after the Argentine invasion.

Six weeks later, 3 Commando Brigade landed at San Carlos under intense Argentine air attacks and 2 Para won the bloody Battle of Goose Green. This was a huge morale boost after the loss of task force ships to bombs and Argentine Exocet missiles.

In June, the major offensive to recapture the Islands begins with 3 Para capturing Mount Longdon, the Royal Marines securing Two Sisters and Mount Harriet. The Scots Guards took the strategic Mount Tumbledown overlooking the capitol, Stanley. The Argentines surrendered on 14 June 1982. In total, the war cost the lives of some 255 British and 650 Argentine servicemen.

Argentinian troops photographed during the invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982





*A warning sign
between Port
Stanley and
Goose Green*

There were probably in the region of 20-30 prisoners on that position. As we looked out towards Goose Green we could see a score of enemy soldiers hot-legging it across the airfield. [They were] on the run, led by somebody we assumed was the company commander on a tractor. Leading the retreat as it were!"

Advance towards Goose Green

After abandoning Darwin Hill and Boca House, the Argentinians were in full retreat towards Goose Green itself in the early afternoon. All four 2 Para companies then approached the settlement from different directions. A Company left Darwin Hill to relieve its namesake settlement on the south east end of the isthmus. B Company circled east to cut off any Argentinian troops that might try to reinforce Goose Green. Meanwhile, D and C Companies sped forward in the centre. "We were aiming straight across the airfield, but were pushed into this defile which was mined so that was a bit of a problem," says Neame. "These were mines that had been rapidly laid with tripwires so you could actually see – or you hoped you could see – where they all were."

Leaving the minefield behind them, Neame's men finally approached Goose Green itself. All four companies had to trek across kilometres of ground to reach both Darwin and Goose Green; the various minefields they encountered slowed down their progress. Therefore it was late afternoon before D Company reached the outskirts of their objective: "Before we could get any closer we had to neutralise the schoolhouse and so further fun and games started. We torched it using phosphorous white grenades. For the children it wasn't an everyday schoolday, [so] luckily none of them were in there, they were in the community hall."

"WE HAD TO NEUTRALISE THE SCHOOLHOUSE AND SO FURTHER FUN AND GAMES STARTED. WE TORCHED IT USING PHOSPHOROUS WHITE GRENADES"

*Captured Argentine soldiers
who were a part of the 1,200
prisoners taken at Goose Green*

Now within reach of the settlement, the safety of the civilians became a concern: "They'd all been rounded up and put in the community hall and kept under lock and key for the previous weeks. The Argentinians were obviously worried that they were going to go across country and tip us off. We didn't know where the villagers were before the battle so this was the logic of not going to the settlements in the dark and trying to fight our way through."

As daylight began to fade aircraft from both sides arrived over Goose Green. Argentinian Pucaras planes hit the area around the schoolhouse while three Harrier jets brought much needed relief to the paratroopers by attacking anti-aircraft guns at the settlement with cluster bombs and rockets.

By now, thoughts were focussing on negotiating the surrender of the Argentinians: "Chris Keeble clearly decided that we needed to try and set this up for a negotiated end particularly after our own air strike went in as a show of force. Had we had to fight our way through towards the end of the day it wouldn't have been easy."

With evening approaching more British reinforcements arrived from the north to assist 2 Para including J Company of 42 Commando. However, they were too late to join in the fighting. Despite the fresh troops, the British decided not to try to enter the settlement until the next day: "We hunkered down in this minefield. I, nevertheless, felt instinctively that

"THE HEADLINES COULD HAVE BEEN, 'ARGENTINIANS REPEL PARA ATTACK ON GOOSE GREEN'"



Above: 2 Para at Port Stanley in 1982 guarding the Argentine prisoners of war

the day was going to be ours and I don't know how you can quite explain that feeling. It's a gut feeling really but I could have been wrong. We would have had a much more anxious night had we known there were still about 1,000 Argentinians in Goose Green. It wouldn't have been beyond the wit of a professional enemy with a bit of initiative that night to have fighting patrols and that would have created enormous damage for us."

Luckily for 2 Para, the Argentinians did not attack and the British were bolstered by resupplies of ammunition during the night. Two Argentinian prisoners were sent by Chris Keeble to negotiate unconditional terms of surrender. The negotiations lasted throughout the night.

The next morning the Argentinians accepted defeat and surrendered to the British. The Paratroopers were generous: "You had to let them surrender with honour as it were. It was quite conventional and traditional, and that I think played cleverly to the Argentinian psyche." D Company's role during the surrender ceremony was to "not directly interfere and to surround the open ground where this ceremony was taking place and to interject if it went wrong."



Above: The temporary resting place for those killed in action from 2 Para including Colonel H Jones

Conservative estimates place the number of prisoners taken as 961 but many are unsure of the true numbers. The scale of the surrender surprised the British: "My Company was down to 100-odd men, slightly less. We were the only troops in sight of where the actual surrender was taking place and it was a fairly jaw-dropping moment as we saw more and more of these Argentinians coming out of the settlement. I remember thinking, 'Jesus there's enough of them here, this is something!' As ever, while it's happening you just stay focussed on what needs to be done".

After the battle, the Paratroopers received a warm welcome from the villagers who treated them as liberators: "An old lady came out of the community hall and was dishing out cigarettes to the Toms. They invited us into their houses, which had been taken over by the Argentinians. Many of them were in a pretty dreadful state." In the immediate aftermath, the trauma the soldiers had been through began to tell. "The day after the surrender we began to think about it a bit. A number of my younger Toms were reporting sick with trench foot and other minor ailments. It didn't ring quite right with me, not

RIFLES OF WAR — THE FN FAL

THE RIFLES AND MACHINE GUNS OF BOTH THE ARGENTINE AND BRITISH ARMIES DURING THE FALKLANDS WAR WERE REMARKABLY SIMILAR

Bursts fired from the Argentine FAL tended to be inaccurate due to the punishing recoil of the 7.62mm round



FABRIQUE NATIONALE FAL

CALIBRE: 7.62X51MM MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 20

The Argentine Army issued a selective fire version of the FN FAL, some with folding stocks; otherwise the rifle was essentially the same weapon that their British adversaries who coveted the full automatic capability of the Argentine version. A number of captured Argentine FALs were later used by the SAS.

L1A1 SLR (SELF LOADING RIFLE)

CALIBRE: 7.62X51MM MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 20



Along with only firing single shots, the British version featured a folding cocking handle

"THE L1A1, OR SLR, WAS THE STANDARD RIFLE OF THE BRITISH ARMY FROM THE 1950S TO THE LATE 1980S WHEN IT WAS REPLACED BY THE SA80"

The L1A1, or SLR, was the standard rifle of the British Army from the 1950s to the late 1980s when it was replaced by the SA80. This British version of the Belgian FAL was modified to fire semi-automatic only. It served with distinction in the Falklands where its accuracy and stopping power were appreciated.

being in a peat bog for a few days they should be okay. I thought: 'I'm not sure this is a real medical problem. I think what they really need is a little reassurance.' I just said, 'No one goes through a regimental aid post without seeing my sergeant-major'. In his own sweet way he gave them the reassurance they needed and the trickle of people going sick died away."

In the aftermath

The Argentinians had lost 45-50 killed in action, while 2 Para had suffered 17 fatalities at Goose Green, giving the fight a grave sense of intimate tragedy. Neame states the battle was highly important for the course of the conflict: "Had we just done a raid, met opposition and withdrawn I think there would have been, and I give 'H' the credit for grasping this, a real risk of it being spun as an Argentinian success. The headlines could have been, 'Argentinians repel Para attack on Goose Green'. 'H' was clear, 'You can't just go and raid. If we're going down there we've got to do this job properly' and again it goes back to the leadership he provided. In his view a raid wasn't a proper mission."

In the scenario of a raid, the impact would have been detrimental to the British campaign. "Morale would have been not at all good. The implications in Whitehall would have been very

serious indeed. So [Goose Green] avoided that and the other point is that here was this victory against all odds. I think it was tremendously important because on a morale and mental level from that point on we had won the war. There's no question that from that moment the Argentinians were intent on surviving, certainly in terms of their army."

The dispute over the islands is still ongoing, 34 years after the war ended: "The irony of it all is, if the Argentinians hadn't invaded the Falklands in 1982, I believe that by now the likelihood would have been that [they] would be under some form of Argentinian control. The British government weren't particularly interested in the islands, in some ways it was a problem for them that they wanted to get rid of... Once [Argentina] had invaded all that comes off the table and I cannot see that sort of sovereignty now changing for 200 years at least. It's a very long view and I don't think politicians have that..."

Neame is clear that the war was worth fighting: "There were no doubts at all. 'H' used to stir up the battalion and say, 'Come on, we're doing this for Maggie!' There was an element that we were doing it for the cause. Clearly we had to go but we were also professional soldiers and this was something we were going to have to do."

"HAD WE JUST DONE A RAID, MET OPPOSITION AND WITHDRAWN I THINK THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN, AND I GIVE 'H' THE CREDIT FOR GRASPING THIS, A REAL RISK OF IT BEING SPUN AS AN ARGENTINIAN SUCCESS"

The Argentine Military Cemetery at Darwin, East Falkland



THE ULYSSES TRUST

TO STRIVE, TO SEEK, TO FIND, AND NOT TO YIELD

SINCE 1992 PHIL NEAME HAS BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED IN CHARITY WORK HELPING TO FUND EXPEDITIONS FOR VOLUNTEER RESERVES AND CADET FORCES

After leading the first attempted British winter ascent of Mount Everest in 1992 with the Territorial Army, Neame set up the Ulysses Trust to fund further expeditions. "It provides funds to help and encourage reserve forces and cadet units to undertake challenging and adventurous expeditions," Neame explains. "We provide a relatively small percentage of the funds that it costs but we'll support almost anything. We don't just support flagship projects like Everest in winter, we'll also support cadet units going off and doing an expedition in North Wales, for example. It's varied and as inclusive as possible and especially giving the cadets an opportunity to do things that are good for their personal development, which they might otherwise never do. We help about 2,000 individuals a year and we dish out a little over £200,000 annually in grants so it makes a difference." For more information visit www.ulysses-trust.co.uk.

"IT PROVIDES FUNDS TO HELP AND ENCOURAGE RESERVE FORCES AND CADET UNITS TO UNDERTAKE CHALLENGING AND ADVENTUROUS EXPEDITIONS"



Below: In 1992 Phil Neame led the first attempted British winter ascent on Mount Everest. This expedition led to the foundation of the Ulysses Trust



Images: Alamy, Corbis, Getty, Rex Features

VERDUN



1916
2016

PART I

Lasting ten months, with 600,000 dead, this monstrous battle produced a loss that is etched into our collective psyche. To understand why and how it happened at all, we first have to look back at its origins

WORDS JONATHAN KRAUSE



From 21 February to 18 December 1916, French and German forces took part in what would wind up being the longest land battle ever. Despite this dubious distinction, Verdun holds a strange place in history. It was not Stalingrad. Verdun did not bleed the Germans white any more than it did the French. It was not a major turning point, and if the French can claim to have won, it was a moral victory as much as anything; the losses suffered by both sides were almost identical.

If Verdun was not the glorious national victory that Stalingrad was, neither was it the staggering disaster that the Somme is – some might say unfairly – remembered as in Britain. In terms of sheer scale, the Somme was roughly double the size of Verdun. The battlefield was longer and the butcher's bill twice as large, despite it lasting only half as long as Verdun. The Somme carries with it the drama of 1 July 1916 and the loss of over 56,000 British soldiers, still the worst day in British military history. By comparison, the French lost 1,560 soldiers on the same battlefield that day, despite contributing roughly half as many troops as the British.

If Verdun does not suffer from quite the same staggering losses as the Somme does for the British, neither does it share as many high-water marks. At the latter, the French broke through twice; along the Flaucourt Plateau in July and again at Bouchavesnes in September. Armoured warfare was born on the Somme, when the British first unveiled their tanks and ordered them to lumber, ungainly, across No Man's Land at Flers-Courcelette on 15 September 1916. Such drama was in short supply along the Verdun front. At most, one could point to the recapture of Douaumont and Vaux, but as we shall see, these accomplishments were hardly equal to the political attention they received.

Despite its lower-key scale, scope and significance, however, the Battle of Verdun remains as one of the centre-pieces of the World War I. In the first of this two-part series, we will explain why.

The landscape of war

At its most elementary level, strategy is about dealing with fixed geographic obstacles. Although it is often overlooked, geography has an enormous impact on the conduct and planning of warfare. The strategies of island and maritime nations differ from those of landlocked or continental nations. Trade routes that have scarcely changed for centuries, even today continue to map out the economic sinews of our world. The transit routes of the modern day's Caribbean drug traffickers are the same ones used by Caribbean pirates over two centuries ago. The very same beaches, coves and inlets used to shield the unscrupulous pilfering of Spanish gold hundreds of years ago, today still offer security to profitable smuggling operations.

As it is with these shady maritime routes, so it was with the Verdun region. The first forts to occupy this area were built nearly 2,000 years before the Germans

launched their attack on 21 February 1916. The Romans had selected the spot as a critical defensive point against Germanic incursions from the east. Over a millennium later in the late 1600s, Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, the great Burgundian expert on all things siege warfare, built a grand star-fort at the site to, once again, defend 'France' from 'the Germans'. Remnants of this fort still remained in 1916 and were used as underground storage for men and materiel.

The 'modern' Verdun fort was born out of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). With the loss of Alsace and Lorraine after this humiliating conflict, France also lost important natural defensive barriers. Faced with the likelihood of future conflicts with the newly created Germany, France had no choice but to build new defensive positions out of stone and mortar. The fortified region of Verdun was part of this new fortified perimeter. On the eve of the battle, however, the region (région fortifiée de Verdun, RFV) was hopelessly unprepared for the conflagration the Germans were about to unleash. The RFV's poor state of readiness was partly a response to modern firepower and partly a result of specific decisions made by French high command.

French forces fail to prepare

For nearly four centuries star forts had provided a formidable defence against invading forces, but this efficacy came to an abrupt end in 1914, with the swift capture of Liège and Namur by German forces. Modern, formidable fortresses were simply crushed by the weight of fire unleashed by Krupp and Skoda's howitzers and heavy mortars. Fortresses provided convenient targets for heavy artillery and their defenders were locked in place.

Instead of fixed fortifications, infantry had to rely on field fortifications (trenches) if they were to stand any chance of surviving the onslaught of modern firepower. The French took note of this, and once the Western Front had settled down into trench warfare, ordered that trenches be dug in and around their forts; not just Verdun but also Toul, Belfort and elsewhere. In and of itself this would make the fortified regions even stronger. However, French strategy under commander-in-chief General Joseph Joffre



The Verdun Cross, created to commemorate the 1916 battle

included a policy of stripping fortified zones of most of their defensive weaponry.

In 1914-15 the French felt under substantial pressure to do whatever they could to repel the Germans and drive them out of France. This, inevitably, meant that the country would have to go on the offensive. The only problem was that France had a severe deficit of heavy artillery. Its army marched to war with only 308 heavy guns, and barely more than 100 of these were truly modern, rapid-fire howitzers, namely the 155mm court tir rapide Rimailho.

What France did have, however, was roughly 11,000 old artillery pieces from the 1870s and 1880s stored away in depots and fortresses. These were stripped en masse from their resting places and pushed into service as a desperate stop-gap measure so that the army could launch a series of, ultimately, failed offensives. The last and largest of these, Second Champagne, 25 September to 6 November 1915, hit Verdun especially hard. In August 1915 alone the RFV lost 20 batteries of heavy guns; they were sent north in preparation for the big push in the Champagne.

As the battle neared, Joffre began demanding not only heavy artillery from Verdun but also machine guns, mortars, grenades and other crucial weapons. Before Second Champagne came to a close, entire infantry divisions were lifted from the region and shuttled north, leaving it weak and undefended. Few within the military knew or cared about the situation; except for Colonel Émile Driant, an officer serving in the région fortifiée de Verdun.

Colonel Driant is one of the most interesting soldiers in service in World War I. A graduate of the elite military school Saint-Cyr, he went

on to become a popular author – writing under the uninventive pseudonym ‘Capitaine Danrit’ – focused on theories of what the next war would be like. As a young man, he married the daughter of none other than General Ernest Boulanger, the ardent nationalist politician and soldier who nearly propelled France into a constitutional crisis.

From 1910, Driant served in the Chamber of Deputies, representing Nancy which had effectively become a border-town with Germany after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. This combination of a fascination with ‘future war’ – which he expected to be against Germany – nationalism, and defence meant that Driant was uniquely placed to command troops in the RFV. He fought vigorously against Joffre’s removal of artillery from the sector in 1915, and was not above calling in favours from his colleagues in government to help give his pleas additional weight. On 15 December 1915, he personally wrote to the Minister of War, Joseph Gallieni, and described the pitiful state of the Verdun sector, but there was little the Minister could do.

Unfortunately for the men defending Verdun, Driant’s efforts were in vain. By October 1915 the RFV was already down to just three divisions and 34 territorial battalions. While the three divisions that the RFV lent to the Champagne battle (3rd, 4th and 53rd divisions) would eventually return, they returned shattered. Each had suffered serious casualties and would have taken months to regain their fighting power, even in the best of circumstances. To make matters worse the sector did not have well-developed trench lines. Most of the area was actually



Above, top: The Germans attack Fort Vaux in June 1916 while there were French troops inside



Above: A fixed artillery position within Fort Vaux. Such positions were anachronistic before the cement had hardened

Right: Joseph Joffre, commander-in-chief of the French Army

“JOFFRE BEGAN DEMANDING NOT ONLY HEAVY ARTILLERY FROM VERDUN BUT ALSO MACHINE GUNS, MORTARS, GRENADES AND OTHER CRUCIAL WEAPONS”

German troops marching to the front during the campaign



VERDUN PRELUDE

A VIEW OF THE LANDSCAPE SOON TO BE RE-SHAPED INTO A VISION OF HELL

The Verdun battlefield began as a salient jutting out from the fortified region of Verdun (RFV). French forces were thinly spread out along this defensive region, providing a buffer for the 19 forts which surrounded Verdun itself. Their precarious position was made even weaker by the Meuse river, which ran through the middle of the battlefield. This made it very difficult for the French to enjoy the usual advantages of interior lines when meeting with attacks along different points of the line. The initial German assault would fall on the right bank of the river between Brabant and Ornes.

BATTLE OF VERDUN

21 February 1916 - 16 December 1916



just a thinly interlinked series of independent field fortifications tying together the various fortresses. There was no second line of trenches to speak of at a time when it was customary to have one nearly as strong as the first. This was the state of affairs right before the German attack.

The first inklings of a German offensive began to appear in January 1916, when a German deserter captured in Denmark told French intelligence of the planned strike at Verdun. Meanwhile, however, Driant's own 56th Battalion of chasseurs à pied (elite light infantry) had begun to notice a build-up of enemy forces and capabilities opposite them. By 16 January, General Frédéric-Georges Herr, commander of the RFV, expressed his nervousness to Joffre, who allowed him to retain control of the 51st division, which had been slated to move elsewhere.

A few days later, Joffre dispatched the commander of the Centre Army Group (Group d'armées de centre, GAC), General Édouard de Castelnau, to the sector to inspect the situation. By the end of January, the RFV had been placed under command of the GAC, which eased its logistics and would allow for the more rapid deployment of reserves if needed. At this time Joffre also began to allow artillery to trickle back into the sector. Roughly ten groups of heavy artillery were moved in late January, including two groups of modern 155CTRs, the best gun the French had.

While this was something, it could never hope to match the 160 batteries of heavy and super-heavy guns sitting opposite them; the Germans had some 1,200 artillery pieces in total and 2.5 million shells. To make matters worse, French defensive positions were still thin, scrabbly and unsuited to the task of defending against a heavy German thrust. The RFV still numbered only 11 divisions compared with the 17 German divisions – totalling some 300,000 men, many of them from elite formations like General Ewald von Lochow's III Corps. Despite last-minute, desperate attempts to prepare Verdun for the coming onslaught, they would find themselves woefully unready and overwhelmed.

The German plan

In stark contrast to the lack of preparedness among French forces, the German army was primed and ready for a battle that it hoped would swing the war in their favour. The battle was conceived by General Erich von Falkenhayn, commander-in-chief of the Germany army from late 1914 until August 1916. Falkenhayn was a naturally pessimistic, taciturn and private man. When he took over for the nerve-wrecked Helmuth von Moltke the Younger he looked out at a very difficult strategic position. Germany,

“IN STARK CONTRAST TO THE LACK OF PREPAREDNESS AMONG FRENCH FORCES, THE GERMAN ARMY WAS PRIMED AND READY FOR A BATTLE”

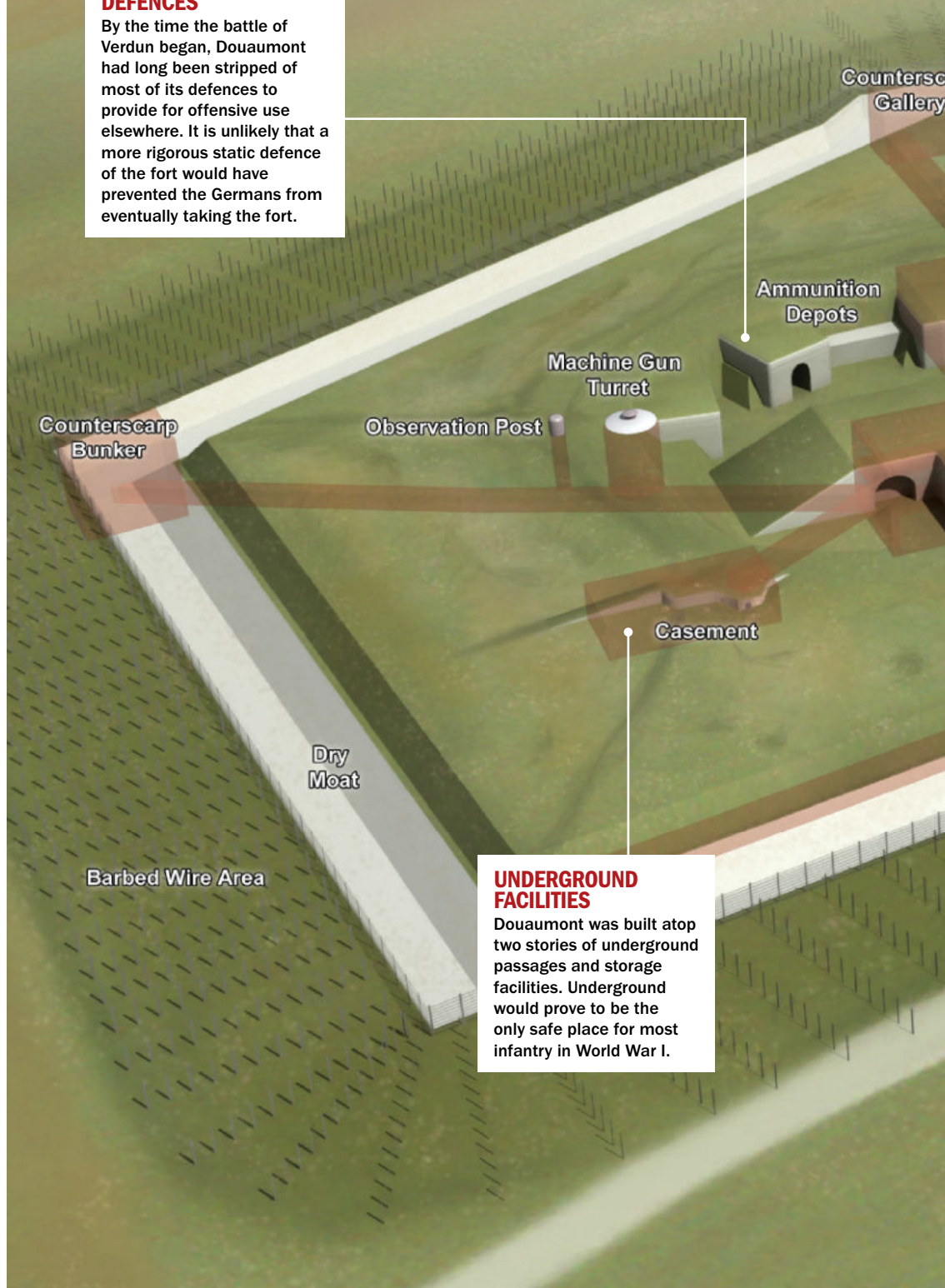
FORT DOUAUMONT

A LOOK INSIDE THE AGEING, BUT STURDY, FORTIFIED FOCUS OF THE BATTLE

Built starting in the 1880s Douaumont was part of the defensive structure France constructed in response to their humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. The fort boasted ample subterranean storage facilities and rotating artillery turrets to augment its traditional fixed artillery emplacements. Its shape reflected lessons learned from centuries of fortification construction, and allowed for wide, overlapping fields of fire from artillery and fixed machine gun emplacements.

STRIPPED OF ITS DEFENCES

By the time the battle of Verdun began, Douaumont had long been stripped of most of its defences to provide for offensive use elsewhere. It is unlikely that a more rigorous static defence of the fort would have prevented the Germans from eventually taking the fort.



UNDERGROUND FACILITIES

Douaumont was built atop two stories of underground passages and storage facilities. Underground would prove to be the only safe place for most infantry in World War I.

ONE OF MANY

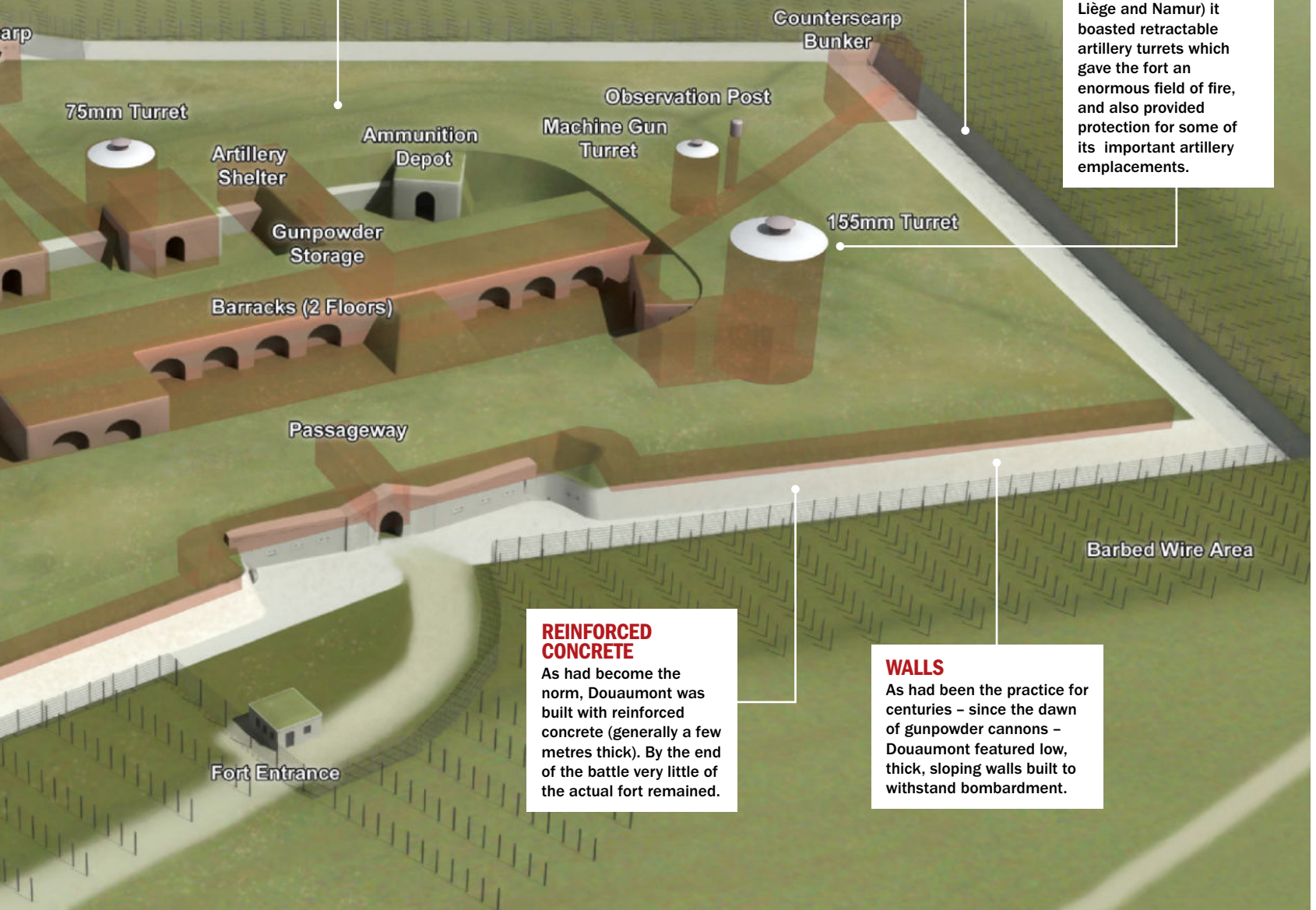
Douaumont was the largest fort in the region, measuring roughly 400 metres across. It was, however, intended to act as part of a wider network of forts, rather than survive exclusively on its own.

MOAT

Douaumont did boast a small moat, but by the time the battle had started it was of no consequence. The fort had been all but abandoned by the start of the battle.

ROTATING ARTILLERY EMPLACEMENTS

As with other 'modern' fortified places (like Liège and Namur) it boasted retractable artillery turrets which gave the fort an enormous field of fire, and also provided protection for some of its important artillery emplacements.

**REINFORCED CONCRETE**

As had become the norm, Douaumont was built with reinforced concrete (generally a few metres thick). By the end of the battle very little of the actual fort remained.

WALLS

As had been the practice for centuries – since the dawn of gunpowder cannons – Douaumont featured low, thick, sloping walls built to withstand bombardment.

“ITS SHAPE REFLECTED LESSONS LEARNED FROM CENTURIES OF FORTIFICATION CONSTRUCTION, AND ALLOWED FOR WIDE, OVERLAPPING FIELDS OF FIRE FROM ARTILLERY AND FIXED MACHINE GUN EMPLACEMENTS”

GAS WARFARE

Poison gas was an enormously important part of trench warfare. Traditionally people wrote that the French were the first to put poison gas shells into artillery, and that they first did this at Verdun. This is not quite correct, as they did so as far back as June 1915, firing a mixture of carbon disulphide and phosphorus. However, by the time Verdun started most gas was being delivered by artillery shells, which greatly increased the misery for troops on the ground, but was a critical part of counter-battery fire.

A German soldier
poses at a Verdun
outpost, wearing a
stahlhelm and mask



despite the excellent performance of its armed forces in the opening months of the war, found itself bogged down in a struggle on two fronts against enemies with vastly deeper pools of manpower and capital. Germany had no chance of victory if at least one of the Entente powers could not be knocked out of the war soon.

For many in the German army, Russia soon seemed like the logical power to attack. After all, 1915 had been disastrous for the Russian army. Starting in May 1915 at the Battle of Gorlice-Tarnow, where German heavy artillery outnumbered the Russian 100 to four, the Russians lost a long series of battles in

what was termed 'the Great Retreat'. Over the course of the year they lost nearly all of their Eastern European holdings and found themselves fighting German troops on Russian soil, taking staggering casualties. Meanwhile, French and British attacks on the Western Front had failed to threaten German positions in France and Flanders. For many in Germany's high command it seemed prudent to rest on the defensive in the West and to continue to push along the Eastern Front.

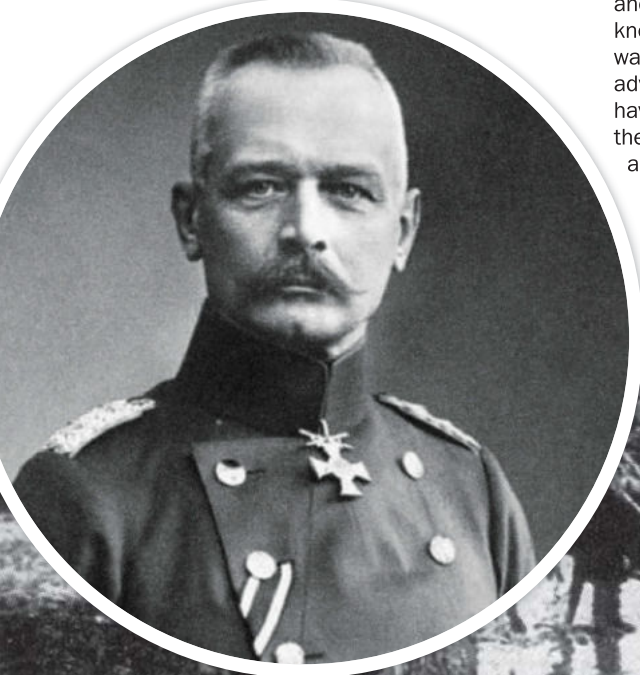
Falkenhayn saw it differently. Russia was vast, and could theoretically continue to absorb staggering losses in men, materiel and pure geography without definitely being knocked out of the war. Worse still, however, was the fact that the further the Germans advanced the longer their logistical lines would have to stretch. This not only would increase the cost of fighting on the Eastern Front – an oft-overlooked consideration in 'total', industrialised war where every resource is precious – but it would lock German forces into a rigid posture.

By late 1915 the German army, despite its substantial advance into Russia – over

"THE GERMAN ARMY, DESPITE ITS SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE INTO RUSSIA (OVER 200KM), WAS STILL IN A POSITION TO SHIFT RESERVE UNITS TO THE WESTERN FRONT"

200 kilometres – was still in a position to shift reserve units to the Western Front relatively quickly in case of an emergency. The further into Russia the Germans advanced the more difficult this would become.

Such a situation would force the Germans to either maintain more forces in the West than they really needed. The choice was either starve the Eastern Front of men and materiel, or run the risk of France and Britain cracking their lines in the West, leading to a potentially catastrophic and hasty retreat to some new line of defence. Neither situation was ideal.



Above: Erich von Falkenhayn, German soldier and Chief of the General staff during WWI



"They shall not pass." The phrase became famous during the defence at Verdun. Here French reserves cross the river

For Falkenhayn, attacking the West was the most promising of a range of poor strategic options he had available to him. He knew that the series of attacks the French launched in late 1914 and 1915 – three in Artois, two in Champagne and smaller attacks further south – had cost them staggering losses. Between August 1914 and February 1916 France lost roughly 650,000 soldiers, dead. This was nearly as many as Britain would lose in the entire war – subtracting Dominion losses – and substantially more than the number of Britons or Americans who would die in combat from 1939-1945. Such a rate of loss simply could not be sustained forever and Falkenhayn knew it. Even if he did not have precise casualty figures for the French and British up to that time.

Given the difficulty of attacking against increasingly complicated trench networks, it seemed unlikely that Germany could take Paris or drive the British army back into the sea. Even if Germany could, the casualties sustained would make the effort something of a pyrrhic victory, therefore harming Germany's chances of winning a lengthy war against Russia. Falkenhayn needed a way to inflict

substantial casualties on his enemies without sustaining large casualties himself. He hoped that he could attack an important point along the French line and then wait on the tactical defensive, thwarting the inevitable French counter-attacks. By doing so he hoped to 'bleed France white' and compel their government to sue for peace. This was the first spark of the idea that would become the Battle of Verdun.

The importance of Verdun

Aside from vague historical significance – which many historians now dispute – Verdun, at the very least, carried with it some important tactical advantages for a German attack. The French position constituted a salient, which meant that the Germans could attack the French from three directions at once. Furthermore, the French position in early 1916 left them with their backs to the river, meaning retreat would be very difficult, if not impossible. The German side of the battlefield was thickly wooded, which would help mask the build-up of German forces before the attack. Furthermore, this build-up would be facilitated by an excellent rail network, most of which – 11 out of 14 rail lines – had in fact been

The Crown Prince had earned a 'playboy' reputation before the war that embarrassed his royal parents



CROWN PRINCE WILHELM

SON OF THE KAISER, AND THE NOMINAL COMMANDER OF THE GERMAN FORCES DURING VERDUN

Son of the last 'Caesar' of 'Germania' the Crown Prince fulfilled his old ancestral duty of commanding military forces in the field. As archaic as it now seems, the Crown Prince was not the only German military leader who was awarded his command by dint of his birth. Many of the senior German generals were from the aristocracy, and some of them proved remarkably talented; most notably Rupprecht, Crown Prince of Bavaria.

The Crown Prince is often chalked up as one of those most opposed to, even disgusted by, the war. This is probably an exaggeration, and one that principally arises from comparing the Crown Prince to his father, who was famously fond of all things military. Despite his apparent distaste for the war the Crown Prince did agree with Falkenhayn on certain aspects of the Verdun battle, including the need for secrecy and the importance of surprise. Once battle began the Crown Prince did somewhat better than his critics expected him to do, but was nevertheless sidelined in November 1916 and forced to give up the command of Fifth Army. This fate befell commanders on both sides in the final months of 1916 and is not a fair verdict on his command.



French long gun battery overrun by the German forces



The city of Verdun lies along the Meuse River, a strategically important feature in France's history

French troops passing through the ruins of Verdun. There is a dark timelessness to shattered buildings, echoing across time from scenes like this to Homs, Syria today



built by the Germans. In comparison the French had only two suitable rail lines feeding into their side of the sector. This meant that Germany could much more easily sustain their efforts, and might be able to simply overload the French logistical train if they could maintain a high-enough level of intensity.

German intelligence had learned that the forts in and around Verdun had been stripped of much of their artillery, so the Germans knew that the French were weaker in the Verdun sector than they had ever been. This was compounded by the relative quietness of the region, which had lulled the French into a false sense of security. Their trench networks were nowhere near as developed as those in other, more active, sectors along the Western Front.

There may have been sound strategic and tactical advantages to Falkenhayn's plan, but he would have a difficult time translating his vision to those under him who would actually have to carry it out. Despite staking out a baldly attrition strategy, Falkenhayn could not tell his subordinates that this was his ultimate goal – the effect on morale would have been crushing. How many soldiers would happily have gone over the top knowing that their commanders saw them as taking part in a pure numbers game? Some tangible goal had to be offered: the city of Verdun itself.

Despite Falkenhayn's strong efforts to avoid anything that might even vaguely resemble a French-style all-out attack, the tactical planning for the offensive soon took on a life of its own. Even those who understood Falkenhayn's broad intentions failed to understand the implementation that the general was hoping for, frequently pushing too far, and seeking to conquer too much.

“THE GERMANS KNEW THAT THE FRENCH WERE WEAKER IN THE VERDUN SECTOR THAN THEY HAD EVER BEEN”

Confusion and miscommunication were perhaps to be expected from an organisation with such an impersonal and secretive leader. Falkenhayn was adamant that any discussion of the upcoming battle – codename: Gericht – must happen in person. No written records were to be left behind, to avoid the possibility of a leak. None of the armies along the Western Front were given clear instruction on what Falkenhayn expected of them, not even Fifth Army, situated in the Verdun sector. His planning for Verdun was so opaque that even now we have very little documentary evidence for it. We have to piece together thin scraps of material to paint a picture of what he was after, and how he conceived of the battle.

Perhaps making the problem worse, Fifth Army was headed by none other than the Kaiser's son: Kronprinz Wilhelm. On the one hand, having the Kronprinz lead the battle opened up the possibility for a major political victory, not just for Germany but for hereditary monarchy in general – a grand dynastic victory for the Hohenzollerns. Nevertheless, the Kronprinz was not a true professional soldier, and to some had to be ‘handled’ by expert military advisors. While this did not necessarily render sound military judgement impossible, it did introduce the possibility of the Kronprinz meddling where perhaps he should not.

Despite these planning woes, Fifth Army did a reasonably good job of preparing itself for the upcoming battle. Its intelligence circulated a note around which said that they expected

a French attack to be launched in February. The hope was that the note would fall into French hands and act as a sort of cover for the preparations Fifth Army was making in January, and February to their trench systems.

They also improved their aerial reconnaissance and more aggressively fought to maintain control of the air. A substantial amount of digging was also required to construct the necessary dug-outs, trenches and depots from which the attack would be launched. Most of the digging was conducted at night, to help mask the amount of effort the army was making. The long nights of January and February were a helpful ally here.

As the day of the attack neared, and new army corps began to appear in the sector, they were kept further away from the front, out of sight of French eyes. Instead they were only cycled into the line immediately before the attack went in, to avoid the French noticing the introduction of new, fresh units to the sector. These efforts, combined with a fortuitous snowstorm, would effectively mask the German attack, and on 21 February 1916 the French were caught entirely off-guard.

IN PART II...

THE HORRORS OF THE BATTLE UNFURL AS THE GERMAN ATTACK GRINDS TO A HALT AND THE FRENCH MAKE PLANS TO STRIKE BACK. ISSUE 28, ON SALE 21 APRIL

Images: Alamy; Getty

French soldiers charge
out of their trench with
bayonets fixed



**“HOW MANY SOLDIERS WOULD HAPPILY HAVE
GONE OVER THE TOP KNOWING THAT THEIR
COMMANDERS SAW THEM AS TAKING PART IN A
PURE NUMBERS GAME?”**

BRITAIN'S TOMAHAWK WARRIORS

WORDS ALICE BARNES-BROWN

As Great Britain once again became embroiled in a struggle with its former colony, an unlikely ally would appear, eager to take the fight to the USA

The Battle of Tippecanoe was an American victory and further fuelled the tensions between the United States and Britain



Folk heroes, especially underdogs, are immortalised in tales told by generations of admirers. Many of these stories that are passed down embellish the truth considerably, but the legend remains a powerful image and an inspiration to all. In Native American culture, where oral history takes on a far more vital role than in our own, Shawnee chief Tecumseh is remembered as one of the truly great resistance leaders in the fight against the white American settlers and their 'manifest destiny'.

In the US, Tecumseh's legacy is one of reverence for a formidable foe. He is also commemorated in Canadian folklore as a man that fought hard to defend Canada against US invasion in the War of 1812. However, this was not his main intention; his aim was to defend the native peoples residing across the border from harm by white settlers. In Britain, he is barely remembered at all. As arguably the most famous Native American warrior in history, he ought to be given his due as a powerful ally, one who combined his own method of warfare with British instruction to create innovative and ingenious strategies.

Born for war

Tecumseh, a member of the Shawnee tribe in Ohio, grew up around war. His father, Pucksinwah, had fought in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) alongside the French, in order to prevent British settlers from gaining further territory in the region. Shortly after Tecumseh's birth in 1768, Pucksinwah was murdered at the Battle of Point Pleasant, during Lord Dunmore's War in 1774. Tecumseh took it upon himself to fight using whatever means necessary to stop his people falling prey to the onslaught of white settlers. He began by disrupting trade routes along the Ohio River, which briefly grounded passing boats to a halt.

Soon afterwards, Tecumseh set his sights much higher, and aimed to expel settlers from his region entirely. In previous decades, the Shawnees had been deliberately isolated from other tribes in the region, so Tecumseh decided to rebuild the trust and solidarity that had been lost in order to effectively fight against the Americans.

He and his brother, Tenskwatawa (also known as 'the Shawnee Prophet'), sought to revive traditional Native religion as a unifying force, raising enthusiasm for battle. Tenskwatawa had already accumulated a considerable support base by prophesying that an apocalypse would destroy the white settlers. What became known as Tecumseh's Confederation had members from tribes all across the region, including the large Iroquois and Wyandot groups. Most were concentrated around the Tippecanoe River, in modern-day Indiana. The main settlement here was named Prophetstown, a centre of Native culture and administration, named after its founder, Tenskwatawa.

After his work at home was done, Tecumseh travelled south to try and recruit the 'Five Civilised Tribes', who had the potential to strengthen the pan-Indian movement enormously: the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole people. These groups were held in relatively good regard by the US, because they had adopted Euro-American ways and were used as an example to other tribes. By gaining crucial allies in this group, Tecumseh knew he would be a formidable force, as they possessed greater influence and resources than any other Native group.

Tecumseh was a fantastic orator, and his speeches were very well attended. In a council with Choctaws and Chickasaws in 1811, he cried, "The annihilation of our race is at hand unless we unite in one common cause against the common foe." He warned against their appeasement tactics, stating, "You are among the few of our race who sit indolently at ease." However, he found it difficult to gain much traction further south, as the Five Tribes had their own ideas about how best to win back (or at least, stay on) Native lands. Pushmataha, a regional Choctaw power-holder, had this to say in response: "Our people have no undue

friction with the whites. Why? Because we have had no leaders stirring up strife to serve their selfish, personal ambitions”.

The confederacy was always intended to be a military alliance, even if it masqueraded as a cultural and religious revival movement. Tecumseh was a warrior at heart, but many of his contemporaries, such as Black Hoof (another Shawnee leader), preferred to go down the diplomatic route to try and win favour with the whites.

Rebellion begins

Tecumseh's finest hour came with his namesake rebellion, which lasted from 1810 and continued during the War of 1812. Tensions had begun to rise between him and local governor William Henry Harrison, the future president of the US. Harrison had refused to nullify the Treaty of Fort Wayne, ceding millions of acres of Native land to the US government, which Tecumseh believed was invalid. In protest, he led a band of 400 warriors to Harrison's house. A particularly heated negotiation escalated when Tecumseh raised his tomahawk and Harrison drew his sword. Chief Winamac, a Potawatomi chief also in attendance, intervened and urged Tecumseh and his band to leave in peace.

As he was departing, Tecumseh threatened to look to the British for support. He talked

of victory, making the tomahawk “fat with the blood of white men”. His developing confederacy was reassured of the success the war would bring, because, according to Tecumseh, the British King would send “brave warriors against them; he will send us rifles, and whatever else we want”. Strange as it is to believe, he talked favourably of the King and in a speech to the Osage tribe called him the ‘Great Father’, saying that he was angry with the Americans. This statement had some truth to it, as the King wanted to reassert British dominance over the American economy. He was willing to ally with Tecumseh to stop Americans encroaching on Canada, which at the time was still a British possession.

While Tecumseh was away making speeches and trying to encourage different tribes to join him, Tenskwatawa was left in charge in Prophetstown. The US army set up an encampment close by, and the battle of Tippecanoe began overnight. Tecumseh returned to find his brother in disgrace and his followers disillusioned. Enraged, he started to rebuild Prophetstown and his shattered Confederacy, preparing his people for the oncoming war.

Right: A stylised portrait of Tecumseh in uniform based on a mistaken belief he was a British general



Tecumseh loses his temper when William Harrison refuses to rescind the Treaty of Fort Wayne

"HEREIN LIES AN EXAMPLE OF THE LIMITATIONS OF BRITISH-NATIVE CO-OPERATION; NO MATTER WHAT TECUMSEH DID, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SHAKE OFF THE STEREOTYPICAL VIEW THAT TRIBESPEOPLE WERE FUNDAMENTALLY SAVAGES"

War of 1812

After the defeat at Tippecanoe, Tecumseh drew closer to the British, as they were less interested in conquering territory and more concerned with maintaining a trade monopoly with the US. For Native Americans, this was the lesser of two evils, and as the war raged on, the British would assist Tecumseh by providing weapons, soldiers and strategic advice. They realised the importance of Native Americans as valuable assets in a battle for territory they had known for millennia. During the American War of Independence (1775-1783), the Shawnee tribe had allied with the British and fought against the US many times. In the eyes of the British, they were a tribe that could be counted upon. The British were happy to supply Tecumseh's men with weapons as long as they continued to harass US supply lines.

Tecumseh aligned himself with Major-General Isaac Brock, a man with substantial vigour, and together they took the fight to US troops in

Detroit, on 16 August 1812. While outside the fort, British troops placed themselves within easy view of the Americans, marched out of sight and repeated the procedure again. As visibility was poor, the Americans were fooled by this roleplay, believing there were more British troops than were actually present. From the other side of the fort, Tecumseh's warriors would do the same thing in a visible clearing of the nearby woods, making a great deal of noise to maximise the illusion and amplify the sense of fear.

In spite of the fact there were only about 600 of Tecumseh's warriors, this repetitive procedure led the American garrison to conclude that there were as many as 3,000 of them. Brock also sent a threatening letter to the US leader, Hull, forewarning that he would not be able to keep the Native Americans under control once the battle had commenced. Since there was a widespread fear of Native savagery and brutality, this threat was taken

very seriously. Hull hoisted a white flag, fearing a massacre by Tecumseh, and around 2,500 Americans were captured by almost a thousand less British and Native American soldiers.

A year later, word got out that the Americans were planning on reclaiming Detroit. Brock had been killed and was replaced by Major-General Procter, a man with little practical experience of battle. On the American side, the aforementioned William Henry Harrison had taken over from Hull, and had constructed a defence on the road to Detroit at Fort Meigs.

Procter resolved to attack this position, in order to prevent the Americans from having the strength to recapture Detroit, as well as to disrupt supply lines. On 1 May 1813, the British opened fire on the fort. Over 450 men from the Canadian militia joined regular units armed with two 24-pounder guns – captured from the last battle at Detroit – two gunboats and nine lighter pieces of artillery. However, Native American troops made up the majority of the invading force, with 1,250 men led by both Tecumseh and Wyandot chief, Roundhead.

After leading a significant number of the US Kentucky regiment into a nearby forest, they were able to inflict a great number of casualties on the American side. In the frenzy, a small number of Native warriors began killing prisoners before Tecumseh persuaded them to stop. As Procter was in command at the time,

SHOWDOWN AT TIPPECANOE

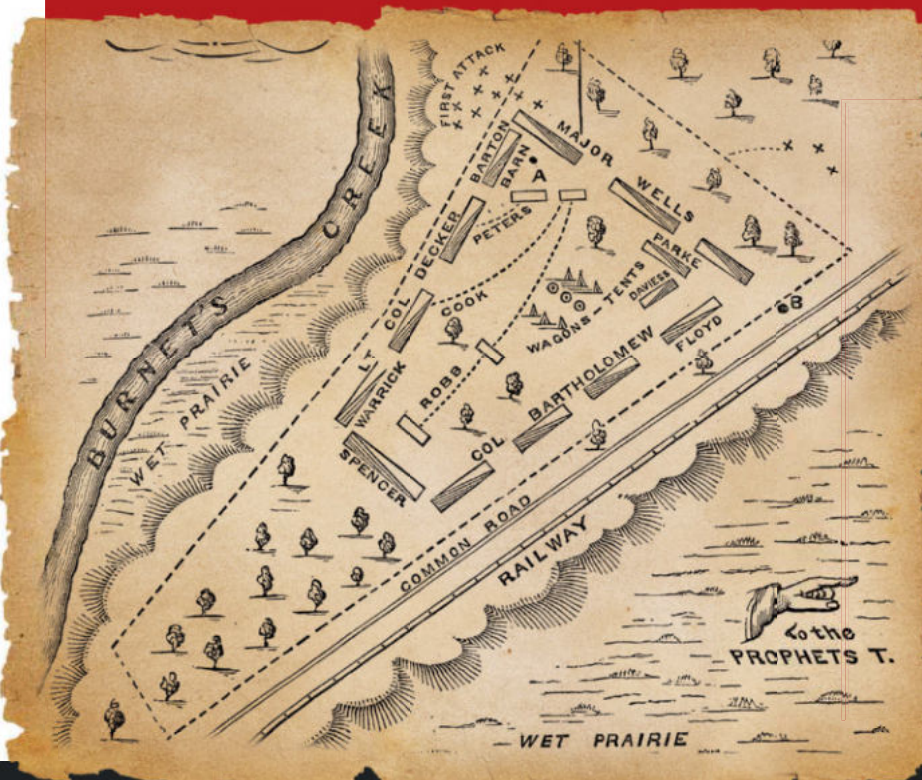
IN NOVEMBER 1811, THE US DECIDED TO LAUNCH A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST TECUMSEH'S CONFEDERACY

The US marched on Tippecanoe in modern-day Iowa to attack Prophetstown and the centre of Tecumseh's rebellion. After numerous attempts to organise a ceasefire with William Henry Harrison, 600-700 anxious Confederacy tribesmen led by Tenskwatawa grew restless. They attacked the US encampment from the exposed north and south perimeters at approximately 4.30am. The east was protected by a steep slope, and the west by a small river. Harrison, leading the US troops, relied too heavily on the terrain and had used a standard, weakened, rectangle camp formation. The attack came as a total surprise, and although the

sleeping soldiers were initially startled, they managed to reinforce their position by working with local militia to repel the attacks from the north and south flanks.

As the fight wore on, Tenskwatawa's warriors grew weary, low on both ammunition and morale. They retreated, and in retaliation the US army destroyed the nearby Prophetstown, delivering a harsh blow to the already fractured Confederacy. Although the battle was technically a draw, William Henry Harrison used the slogan 'Tippecanoe and Tyler Too' during his presidential campaign in 1840 to remind voters of his military prowess.

Left: This sketch shows the location of personnel in the US encampment. Tenskwatawa's warriors attacked from woodland to the north and south. Below: A music sheet cover for the 'Tippecanoe Quick Step' arranged some 30 years after the battle had taken place



Tecumseh furiously questioned why he had not stopped them, to which he retorted that the Natives could not be controlled. Herein lies an example of the limitations of British-Native co-operation; no matter what Tecumseh did, it was impossible to shake off the stereotypical view that tribespeople were fundamentally savages.

The Battle of the Thames

At this point in the war Tecumseh was rapidly losing faith in the British and he and Procter disagreed over potential retreat. The latter wished to return to the safety of Canada, to resume fighting after the winter had weakened the US army, whereas the former was eager to regain land for his people. Tecumseh followed Procter's forces in late September 1813 until he reached Moraviantown, Canada – 50 miles east of Detroit.

Tecumseh announced here that they would go no further with the British forces, and delivered a moving speech which reveals his mounting distrust. "We are much astonished to see our father [Procter]... preparing to run away without letting his red children know what his intentions are," said Tecumseh. "The Americans have not yet defeated us... and we therefore wish to remain here." To Procter, he said, "You have the arms and ammunition which our great father [the King] has sent for his red children. If you have an idea of going away, give them to us." The oncoming battle would be Tecumseh's last stand. After his death, the alliance of tribes he had toiled hard to create would completely disintegrate.

Artistic depictions of the Battle of the Thames show Tecumseh's warriors fighting with tomahawks, and the US army with rifles and muskets. However, it is more likely that Native warriors used a combination of traditional weapons and those provided by the British. They had supplied over 25,000 guns for approximately 10,000 auxiliary troops Tecumseh had recruited. It is said Tecumseh himself traded one of these weapons for a Kentucky rifle just days before the Battle of the Thames on 5 October 1813, at which he died defending Native troops against all odds. It is said he even had premonitions of his own death, and painted his face black that day in preparation to meet his end.

Death and legacy

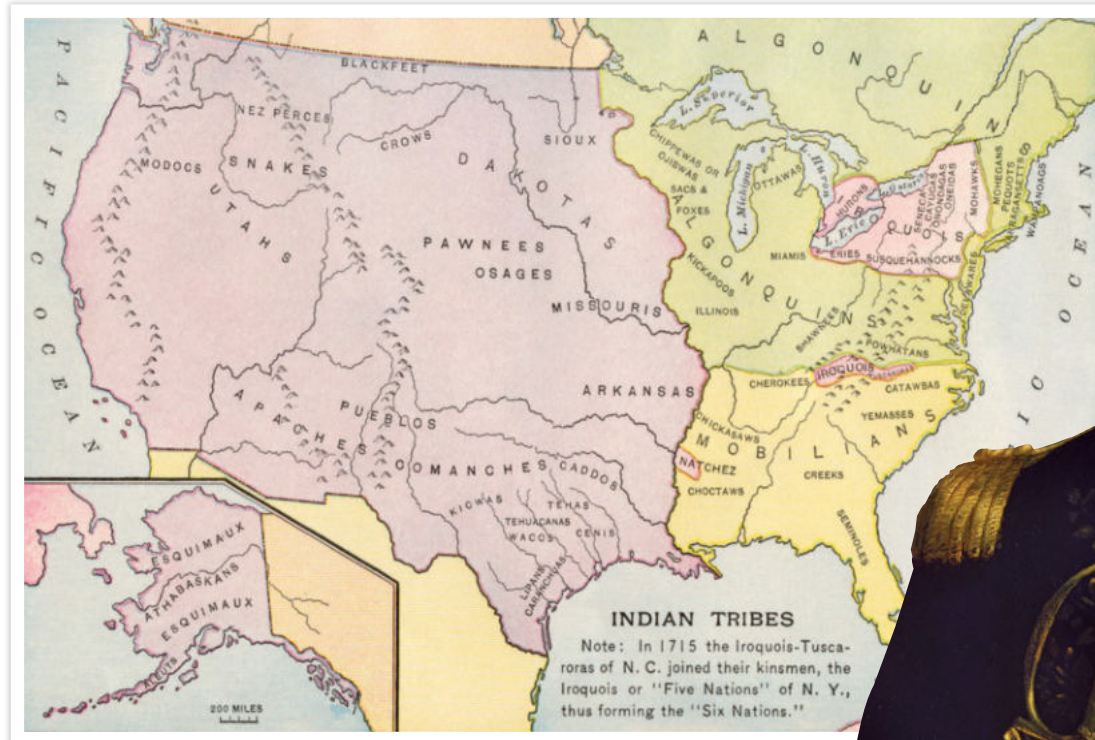
With Tecumseh gone, his Confederacy fell, and Native Americans lost one of their greatest leaders. Procter was eventually court-martialled for the poor leadership he had shown during the battle. However, his temporary suspension was little consolation for Tecumseh's men, who had lost more than just a commander. The breakdown of the British-Native alliance meant that neither party could put up any meaningful resistance to increased US settlement, so Natives were forced off their historic homelands. The repercussion of this is still discernible today; tribes that once lived far and wide on rich soil have been reduced to small, barren, desert reservations in the West.

Some of the Confederacy tribes agreed to a truce only a week after Tecumseh's death, as the removal of British protection made them prey to American aggression. Tecumseh had been the man that inspired them to keep fighting, keep pushing for their independence, so today is remembered as a formidable opponent, even by white American citizens. The man believed to have killed him, Richard Johnson, was later made Vice President of the US, due to the respect garnered from the incident. The Battle of the Thames also dramatically increased William Henry Harrison's popularity, and aided his presidential campaign.

Many towns in the American Midwest and southern Canada are named after Tecumseh. Even the renowned Union Civil War general, William Tecumseh Sherman, had to live up to the legend that gave him his middle name. A warship built by the Canadian Navy in 1815, to defend against the Americans, was named HMS Tecumseh, in memoriam of the recently deceased Canadian folk hero. Likewise, in the US, four ships have been named after him since his death.

The fact that Tecumseh, in spite of his deplored ethnicity, has inspired such recognition is a testament to the success of Native American tribal warfare. It serves as an important reminder that British military history is not always composed of men from high society, and that indigenous peoples played a far larger role than much historical writing would suggest.

Below: A map depicting the broad territories held by 18th-century Native American tribes



Right: After his military career, William Henry Harrison would go on to become the Ninth President of the United States



“NEITHER PARTY COULD PUT UP ANY MEANINGFUL RESISTANCE TO INCREASED US SETTLEMENT, SO NATIVES WERE FORCED OFF THEIR HISTORIC HOMELANDS”

DOWNFALL AT THE THAMES

AT TECUMSEH'S LAST STAND, THE BRITISH AND THE NATIVE AMERICANS WERE OUTNUMBERED ALMOST 3 TO 1

William Henry Harrison's men gave chase as Procter retreated into Canada. Tecumseh's men attempted to slow them, but a confrontation eventually came at Moraviantown, a settlement of Christian

Native Americans. Procter set up a line of British troops, with only one cannon to protect them. Tecumseh's warriors flanked the Americans to the left, with the river to their right. However, when the cannon failed to fire, Harrison's troops

broke through. Procter fled and Tecumseh's warriors continued to fight to the end. Despite the fact the residents of Moraviantown had not taken part in the fighting, their village was burned by the US army in reprisal.

1. HARRISON'S FORCE

The 3,500 Americans led by Harrison were much better prepared for battle than the British or Native troops, having captured further weapons and supplies. The British soldiers also had serious doubts about Procter's leadership, so Harrison's main focus was to scupper British forces, giving the Americans the upper hand.

2. TECUMSEH'S FORCE

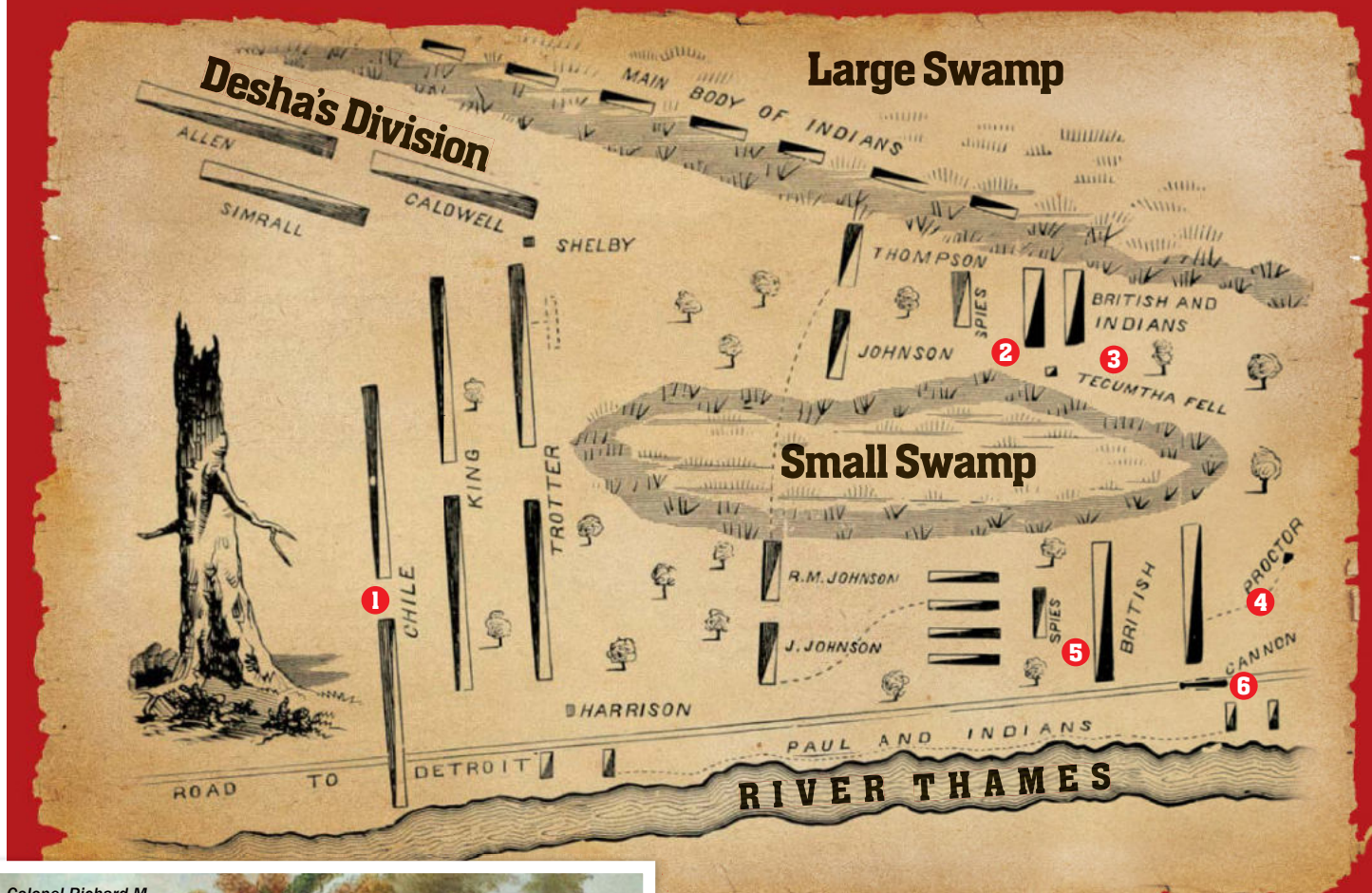
The Confederation army numbered about 500 at this point. Armed with a combination of guns and tomahawks, they were distracted by a smaller unit and could not reach the bulk of the enemy. However, both forces got bogged down in the swamp and had to dismount.

3. BRITISH ARMY

Procter's plan was to isolate the US troops on the banks of the river and force a surrender. By having the Native Americans flank them to the north and 800 British troops directly ahead of them, theoretically there would be nowhere else for them to go.

4. BROKEN CANNON

This six-pounder cannon was virtually the only piece of artillery available to Procter after his retreat. It was supposed to drive the US army off the road, but the dilapidated weapon failed to fire. At this point, the Americans broke through the British line.



Colonel Richard M Johnson leads the Kentucky mounted volunteers during the Battle of the Thames, resulting in the death of Tecumseh



5. BRITISH RETREAT

Having made a final attempt to fire one more round at the US troops, Procter and a number of his men fled after less than ten minutes of fighting. The remainder surrendered, leaving the Americans free to deal with Tecumseh and his warriors.

6. TECUMSEH KILLED

After American reinforcements arrived, Tecumseh's warriors did not stand a chance, armed only with axes, knives, as well as a few guns. It is not known exactly who killed Tecumseh, as many claim to have done so. His Wyandot deputy, Roundhead, was also killed in the fighting.

"AFTER AMERICAN REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVED, TECUMSEH'S WARRIORS DID NOT STAND A CHANCE"



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AN INTERVIEW WITH
VICTOR GREGG

TO HELL & BACK

WORDSTOM GARNER

This outspoken veteran witnessed, and survived, some of the most poignant and horrific events of World War II

On the night of 13 February 1945, a young British soldier was awaiting his execution. Until now he had survived everything: terrorists in the Holy Land, the Sahara Desert, Beda Fomm, El Alamein, Italy and Operation Market Garden to name but a few. This time, his luck had run out. Captured after the chaos at Arnhem, and after several escape attempts, he was arrested and charged with sabotage. The sentence: firing squad. However, on this terrible night he was distracted by the wail of sirens and the roar of explosions above and around his prison. As fate would have it, the unbridled firestorm that was to consume Dresden, claiming the lives of thousands, would ultimately be his saviour.

Born in London in 1919, Victor Gregg is one of the last regular soldiers to have fought in World War II. Over 70 years after the fateful night in Dresden,

he became an author for the first time when he published the acclaimed account of his wartime experiences in *Rifleman* (2011). Now aged 96, he is a unique individual both for the sheer amount of history that he has witnessed and the dispassionate frankness with which he talks about some of the most horrendous situations human beings can endure. The following is his story.

India & Palestine

After working in a variety of jobs, Gregg accidentally joined the British Army in 1937. He met a recruiting sergeant in Whitehall, while watching the Horse Guards parade; "It wasn't as if I went out that morning to join the army, I was press-ganged into it," he recalls. Soon he found himself training for the Rifle Brigade and after six months training in marksmanship, was shipped out to commence his first tour of duty during the dying years of the Raj in 1938. Once there, he found that life in India was strictly segregated between soldiers and civilians: "The only time you came into contact

"THIS TIME, HIS LUCK HAD RUN OUT. CAPTURED AFTER THE CHAOS AT ARNHEN, AND AFTER SEVERAL ESCAPE ATTEMPTS, HE WAS ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH SABOTAGE. THE SENTENCE: FIRING SQUAD"

Victor Gregg as a young rifleman in the late 1930s. He is one of the last surviving regular soldiers from World War II

with the local population was if there was a traditional do... of course, we had to go out and maintain peace and stability, but we never had any ammunition," he remembers. "If there had been any concerted ideas to run at us we would have had it, but they never did".

Gregg also had to contend with the climate and the rigours of army discipline, "You had to be able to withstand the heat. If you went out without a hat, even at midnight, you had 14 days punishment. I was only 19 years of age. You had no sense of your own importance; you were firmly in the grip of your superior, 'They know best,' which was drilled into you. It was very regimented." Despite the challenges, he came away with good memories, "India was great. Coming from the background I came from it was a big adventure."

The following year the Rifles left India and were posted to Palestine, then a British Mandate; "They sent us when they realised trouble was in the offing. This was before the war broke out, early 1939 we landed in Haifa. [This] was where I first saw action but it was only of an anti-terrorist nature. The lads who fought in Northern Ireland in the Eighties and

Below: British troops advancing during the Battle of El Alamein. This was the key turning point in the North African campaign



Allied tanks stand ready to advance as the Battle of El Alamein begins

the lads in Afghanistan were more or less experiencing the same thing."

Almost a decade before the establishment of Israel, British troops were already trying to police a long battle between Jewish settlers and the Palestinians: "We were caught right in the middle. We were fighting odds and sods with the Palestinians but in no way did they compare to the brutality of the [Jewish] Stern Gang. They'd get a forty-gallon drum and fill it with gelignite or dynamite and stick it in the road. Anything went over it, *bang*, half the mountain comes down. There was no comparison with them and the Zionist organisations that came afterwards."

"Of course, if there were a quarrel between the Jews and Palestinians, the British magistrates would always come out on the side of the Zionists. A lot of us became sympathetic to the Palestinians. However, I was only 19. They only had to blow the bugle and sing 'Land of Hope and Glory' and I was there." At the time, like many people, Gregg did not question the purpose of the British Empire: "I was drugged. It was the way people lived back then, we knew all the history dates at school and we knew Nelson's birthday, Empire Day, General Wolfe. That's the way we were taught, the walls were covered in pictures of warships and men in red charging forward with bayonets."

"THEY'D GET A FORTY-GALLON DRUM AND FILL IT WITH GELIGNITE OR DYNAMITE AND STICK IT IN THE ROAD. ANYTHING WENT OVER IT, BANG, HALF THE MOUNTAIN COMES DOWN"



Into North Africa

Once war was declared on 3 September 1939, Gregg's regiment was posted to North Africa, where he would spend the next three years fighting in the western desert. After experiencing a brutal baptism of fire at the Battle of Beda Fomm in February 1941, and then Operation Crusader, he became a driver in the Libyan Arab Force Commando. He assisted in covert operations, delivering messages to and from Bedouin tribesmen, spending large amounts of time driving alone through the desert. Gregg didn't mind the difficulties of this role: "Once you're up there, you're up there for months so you get used to the terrain and the desert, you get used to the bright stars and driving at night... You get used to the kilns that are built by the Bedouins as funeral pyres and you can also see tracks that are almost invisible that are left by the Bedouin. On the cliffs of the western desert it was impossible to get lost because all you had to do was use a compass. There was no way anyone would have known where you were. If you'd been caught you would have been shot. When I went

back to Alamein they questioned me and the commander asked me how many Germans I'd killed. I said, 'It was like a public holiday.' I wasn't shot at. Mind you, if the truck had broken down I'd have been a bag of bones. You had to be the type of person that could get along, make decisions on your own, suss it all and get on with it."

When Gregg wasn't driving alone through the desert, he learnt the meaning of comradeship, especially in his Rifle unit. "We looked out for each other, you might not like the bloke but you're in that situation. If you were unable to do a job – if they thought you weren't up to it, bad news from home, family trouble, or if something upset you – the CO would move you out... It wasn't considered a disgrace, not like some units where they would accuse you of cowardice. If you're in a frontline unit then you know what it's all about, nobody can kid you that it's going to be a cakewalk. You're left with a comradeship that never leaves you."

By 1942, the war in North Africa was not going well for the British and the German 'Desert Fox', Erwin Rommel, was chasing the Eighth Army back to Egypt. The situation was critical, and Churchill appointed Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery to take charge.

'Monty' is now remembered as an energetic commander who was popular with his troops. However, Gregg's opinion of the man is more withering, describing him as brash. "He'd never proved himself to us; we'd heard the same tale

time and time again. We had a long history of seeing brigadiers and generals turning up, do a stint and then get sent home in disgrace because they'd ballsed everything up. Monty used to come round the different units, giving you a lot of bullshit with his hat on. If he didn't have your regimental badge in his hat, he'd stop a rifleman and say, 'Give us your badge,' and put it in his beret. He had a collection of them. The young lads who came out had never fired a shot in anger, that's what it was all about and Monty cheered them all up. He was definitely brash. He didn't care who he was talking to; he was at loggerheads with Eisenhower all the way through Europe. He regarded the Americans as a load of peasants."

Nevertheless, 'Monty' was the commander in charge at the Second Battle of El Alamein from 23 October to 11 November 1942, now recognised as the decisive turning point in the North Africa campaign. Gregg fought in the thick of the battle with the Rifle Brigade in an area known as 'Snipe', a small depression in the desert and a vital strategic outpost. The Allies needed to control it in order to escape the vast German minefield that impeded their advance. Once this position was taken, the British could drive their armoured divisions through and push the Axis forces back.

This meant the position became a fierce battleground, where the Rifle Brigade found themselves fighting off the German 90th Light Division, the 21st Panzer Division and the

"MONTY USED TO COME ROUND THE DIFFERENT UNITS, GIVING YOU A LOT OF BULLSHIT WITH HIS HAT ON"



Above: A Jewish civilian is searched near Jerusalem in an attempt to identify members of terrorist organisations

El Alamein was a titanic fight to save Egypt from the Axis forces. Gregg was at the forefront fighting with the Rifle Brigade



BATTLE OF BEDA FOMM

VICTOR GREGG EXPERIENCED HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A FORGOTTEN BRITISH VICTORY IN 1941

This largely forgotten clash took place between 6-7 February 1941 and was a significant defeat for the Italian army in Libya. However, Gregg remembers that it was a savage encounter: "It was the first victory the British army had since the outbreak of the war when we captured the whole of the Italian army. The Rifle Brigade spread across the road, 500 men captured 26,000 men and it ended up with their tanks right on top of us and it finished with us clubbing each other with rifle butts."

"Of all the battles I was in, probably the one that is least recognised [is] the Battle of Beda Fomm. That was the one where, except for a few instances in Arnhem, we were almost hand-to-hand – that was the one which we didn't expect to live through." For the first time in his life, Gregg was engaged in vicious fighting: "Even then discipline was maintained. You don't know the hand-to-hand fighting is happening, you're not aware of it. It's such a mix up in noise, screaming, shouting and things like that, it's like being in a pub brawl more or less, but, of course, there are a lot more people involved."

Despite the desperate struggle, Gregg still respected the Italians' bravery: "They certainly didn't lack any courage because they were getting mowed down in their dozens. You can't just fire a machine gun into a crowd of men and you'd only hit them. If they were only about a hundred yards away then you were killing hundreds of them. The vast majority of Italians were never captured... the last thing they wanted was to be in a bloody war but by the time they'd withdrawn right the way back they were making for Tripoli and home."



**"IT'S SUCH A MIX UP
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A row of Italian Fiat M13/40 medium tanks captured by the British during the battle
Right: Libya was a disaster for the Italian Army with over 100,000 men becoming prisoners



Italian Trieste Division. Gregg was unfazed: "The battalion I was in was still dominated by regulars. It was good because it was a fully disciplined and experienced force, that's how we managed to survive at Snipe." When it came to defending against tanks, he remains unequivocal: "You don't fight tanks, you dodge them, because a tank goes round you and carries on. Once we'd got the six-pounder at Alamein at the Snipe, after that tanks weren't a problem. We knew jolly well that prior to Alamein that we had nothing that we could stop them with.

"The only thing we had was the accuracy of a Bren gun over a Spandau," he continues. "Spandaus could fire 1,200 rounds a minute, Bren guns 500 a minute. But a Spandau, when it's firing, is jumping up and down so it's less accurate. We never thought the Germans were better than us. You get 11 men in a platoon armed with one rifle, a Lee Enfield 303 – which is deadly accurate – and the blokes who are [firing] them have been trained to use them, not bang them on the ground for theatrical effect. You're taught to use a rifle to kill people so the damage you can inflict on the enemy with just one company of riflemen is out of proportion."

Gregg had no idea what he was walking into when he marched to the Snipe, "I was in a carrier battalion, so the carriers lead off and we end up doing this two mile walk and we find ourselves in a disused German pit with all the detritus of war and we don't realise that we're only ten feet away from the Germans. We know we're going to be hit anyway and we've got to make the best of it, so we dig a little slope

"YOU'RE TAUGHT TO USE A RIFLE TO KILL PEOPLE SO THE DAMAGE YOU CAN INFLICT ON THE ENEMY WITH JUST ONE COMPANY OF RIFLEMEN IS OUT OF ALL PROPORTION"

and lie flat and we're in a position to guard the six-pounder guns. The section between me and Tansey [a driver] were all killed, the three of them killed together. The slightest movement and that was it. You had to live a life on your belly. There was 18 hours of it."

The Rifle Brigade's actions at Snipe became a legendary part of the Allied victory, with Lieutenant-Colonel Victor Turner winning a Victoria Cross. Many see the battle as one the most significant turning points of the war, but Gregg disagrees: "We all had the knowledge of what the Russians were doing to the Germans. We always recognised that it was the Ruskies who were going to finish them off. They did win the war whether you like it or not."

As for the actual cost of winning El Alamein, Gregg tried to minimise the casualties that were inflicted on the enemy: "After a certain time, you don't shoot to kill men. If there's an enemy and he's 70 yards away and he's got no weapon, you don't shoot him. You get over it, in the first six months you might try and kill as many as possible but you get over that and I think that's true of the majority of men... We're not actually born psychopaths but we can be forced into psychopathic actions; we can turn

into murderous criminals but left to our own devices a lot of blokes won't do it. Not if they think they're not in danger. I think it's in all human beings, whether they're German, Italian, Russian, whatever. I don't think I'm different to anyone else, not of my generation."

After El Alamein, Gregg was approached to join the new Parachute Brigade: "They wanted men from the 7th Armoured Division. They promised you the earth. They promised two weeks leave. That was too much to resist. We'd been in the desert for three years so we finished by taking names out of a hat and I was on it. I was a paratrooper by chance, I didn't volunteer any more than all the other blokes."

After intensive training in Palestine, and a relatively short spell of service in Sicily and Italy, Gregg was given leave and returned to England for the first time since he had left in 1938. He wasn't above breaking military law, albeit for a good cause: "Christmas 1943 we came home and I got married on New Year's Day 1944. On D-Day I was in Southby Bridge doing 28 days because I'd nicked some leave passes to spend time with Freda [his wife]."

Operation Market Garden

On 18 September 1944, Gregg was to play his own part in Operation Market Garden, parachuting into the Netherlands. The Allied plan was to seize strategic bridges at different locations over the River Rhine in order to invade Germany's industrial heartland, bringing the war to a swift conclusion. One of the most crucial bridges was located in the now infamous Dutch town of Arnhem.

Here, the lightly armed paratroopers fought bravely, but were no match for the German SS Panzer Divisions in the area. Caught in the thick of the battle, Gregg fought for six days just miles away from the bridge. He recalls just how chaotic the operation became: "It was bloody awful. We [landed] and already the bloke in charge – Browning, who had 13 gliders for his own entourage – lands on the wrong side of the river and is completely out of the picture. And he's the bloke in charge! The bloke who replaces him, Urquhart, decides he wants a nice place where he can have a kip and direct his forthcoming victory in some sort of relative comfort. They go for a walkabout and while he's in this house he's surrounded by German tanks and he can't get out. So we're two days without a commander dodging the Germans."


As the carefully laid Allied plans unravelled on the battlefield, it became clear that the objectives were beyond reach, and even that the mission was doomed from the start. "All the stuff we'd been told before we [jumped]: Jump, land, assemble and then do a walk-trot to the bridge to join the lads didn't happen. We




RIFLEMAN GREGG'S COMBAT POSTINGS

VICTOR GREGG SAW COMBAT IN NEARLY EVERY MAJOR CAMPAIGN OF THE EUROPEAN WAR, FROM FIGHTING TERRORISTS IN PALESTINE TO BECOMING A PRISONER OF WAR






Gregg was one of thousands of paratroopers jumping over the Netherlands. At the time Operation Market Garden was the largest airborne operation ever attempted



British Soldiers search a Dutch school for German snipers



Men of the 1st Paratroop Battalion, 1st (British) Airborne Division taking cover in a shell hole

jumped with about 400-500 men but by the time we got off we were down to 200-300 men, the rest of them were lying prone, dead. After about an hour the CO tells us to move forward and we walk-run for about an hour but we didn't get very far. Let's say a mile."

Gregg was engaged in fierce fighting and his unit took heavy casualties. "I've got a Vickers machine gun, I'm the number one because I'm the oldest soldier and the other two lads: there's one bloke feeding the belt in and there's the other bloke who's keeping an eye out for what's going on. Eventually as the days went by these blokes ended up being killed or wounded and [being] replaced... It was a succession of almost complete chaos. After the end of the third day they realised that all was lost. They couldn't get through to the bridge because the Germans had put this armoured division between us so we gradually fell back on this hotel the Hartenstein – or what was left of us – because they had formed a line around that."

With the operation a failure, the British made preparations to withdraw. "When the message came through after the sixth day

that we were going to go back across the river, they sent the machine guns and a couple of rifle sections out in front to provide an extra perimeter so the others could get away. We all knew the drill; there wasn't a lot of protest. When you'd been in the army as long as I had you knew what to do." Fighting in a rear-guard action, Gregg suddenly found that he and his comrades were isolated. "We ran out of ammo, about three in the morning, and someone goes back, an officer he was, to get more ammo and he comes back and he says, 'There's nobody there,' but he thought the Germans were around us so it was all over. So we got the job of trying to get out of it, escape, but the following day we were captured".

For Gregg, the fighting around Arnhem was on a different level to anything he had experienced. "It was chaos in the fact that I'd never before been in the situation where there was no hope of getting away with it. At Snipe we knew always knew we had to get out of it sooner or later or we'd be captured. But there was no getting out of Market Garden unless it was over the river." Despite this brutal


experience he retained his self-control. "I don't ever recall feeling dejected. It's strange really; you just move positions to stop yourself being bombarded. You need the experience to do that without thinking. A lot of the lads who jumped at Arnhem – the vast majority of them were all brand new to it – there was only a small contingent of the 1st Airborne Division who had any real experience of battle. Those men were all put in support groups which were the backbone of any defence. That's why nearly all of us when [captured] all had service. You don't lose your cool and you don't run around like headless chickens."

Prisoner of war

Gregg and his comrades were finally caught while fighting in the rear-guard after Arnhem. "I was in a ditch. These Germans were coming down the road and they come up there and they stop at the ditch where three of us were hiding and, of course, they saw us and they just pointed their guns and said, 'Come Tommy, Tommy come. Quick, quick, come.' So you get up don't you?" Taken from the Netherlands into

"AS THE CAREFULLY LAID ALLIED PLANS UNRAVELED ON THE BATTLEFIELD, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE OBJECTIVES WERE BEYOND REACH, AND EVEN THAT THE MISSION WAS DOOMED FROM THE START"

During Operation Market Garden Allied paratroopers came under fire almost as soon as they landed



At the age of 96 Victor Gregg remains highly active writing books and giving interviews about his war experiences

Germany, he did not adjust well to captivity. "It was horrible, I didn't like it at all. You get different treatment, that's true of any country, or wherever you are. If you got captured on the battlefield then you were treated with a certain amount of respect. The further you were shunted down the line after you'd been captured the less respect you were given."

Gregg's first experience of a POW camp left a vivid impression: "I'm in limbo, in this bloody horrible transit camp. The Germans put a hosepipe in the cesspit where all the excrement was and they used to hose us down with that. That was a very effective way of establishing law and order, everybody's washed down with their own shit."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, he made several attempts to escape, along with fellow prisoners. On one occasion he almost escaped to Czechoslovakia: "A couple of times we tried to get away. The last time we really thought we'd made it until this bloke in front of us disappeared into these bushes and the ground in front of him went. Of course, you couldn't see anything because of the snow. We disappeared after him and landed on this road below. These young Germans were practicing making road blocks, so they just saw us, put us in this lorry and then they took us back to camp."

"WHILE WORKING AT THE SOAP FACTORY, GREGG AND A YORKSHIREMAN CALLED HARRY COMMITTED A PRANK THAT RESULTED IN THE ENTIRE FACTORY BURNING TO THE GROUND"

After this failed escape attempt, he had to face the wrath of the camp's commandant and guards. "The bloke in charge, he was alright, but the guards they were all nut cases. They'd all come back off the Russian front and in one sense or another they would have shot you out of hand for the slightest thing, but the commander was alright. He said, 'I've got to punish you,' because he was deep in this thing as well. I just said, 'Well, get on with it then.'" Gregg was sent to the soap factory. At first glance this may not have seemed like much of a punishment, but it involved a six-mile walk through the snow every morning and every night during February.

While working there, Gregg and a Yorkshireman called Harry committed a prank that resulted in the entire factory burning to the ground. They were arrested and incarcerated in a prison in Dresden. "We're marched into this office and in comes this geezer with a big black suit on, silver buttons, swastikas, silver braid round his hat and he spoke like a zombie that's just come out of Oxford. His name was Muller and he says, 'I've got no alternative. The decree has gone out: anybody causing trouble will be shot... You two are saboteurs. There's no way. You're going to get shot tomorrow morning.' And that was it, 'Out!'"

Having been sentenced to death, Gregg was marched into a large room full of prisoners awaiting execution but even in the darkest of moments he was, and remains, philosophical about the experience. "You accept it like anything else. You've lived through six years never knowing whether the day is going to be your last so just because some geezer

says you're going to get shot you don't actually believe it, not until it's going to happen because where there's life there's hope".

In the end, Gregg's date with a firing squad never arrived, but under the worst circumstances possible. On what was meant to be his last night, Allied bombers flew over Dresden and commenced one of the most devastating and controversial bombing raids of the entire war. Somehow, amidst the firestorms and collapsing buildings, Gregg survived, helping rescue teams to clear up the destruction for approximately four days. He still feared for his life following his death sentence and managed to slip away across the River Elbe in order to reach the advancing Red Army.

He achieved this after three days on the road: "I got through to the Russians, it was the only way you could go which was through the east, you couldn't get through to the west. When I approached them I had a pair of German boots on and I had a German coat on. I still had some sort of British gear on me but I still had no idea what they were going to do. At the same time, I was so tired and hungry that I didn't care. They moved me away among some other blokes, prisoners and stuff like that and they fed us and I got approached by an officer who was this French bloke and he says, 'Oh you're English.'" Upon Gregg's confirmation that he was, the officer asked him if he was able to speak either French or German. Gregg could not. "Then he brought a German over who could speak English, so then I kept with this mob who were marching along with the troops."

Gregg observed with some bemusement that the Soviet way of fighting was completely different to the Western Allies: "The troops weren't organised, they were like a swarm of locusts moving over the fields. Only the people



Left: Grave of an 'unknown British soldier' killed during the Battle of Arnhem in September 1944

Below: British paratroopers taken prisoner after the Battle of Arnhem. For the first time in his military career Gregg was a captive of the Germans



HORROR AT DRESDEN

GREGG'S LIFE WAS CHANGED FOREVER WHEN HE WITNESSED THE OBLITERATION OF ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITIES IN GERMANY

On the night of 13-14 February 1945, Gregg was imprisoned in Dresden awaiting execution with his friend Harry for sabotaging a soap factory. All that changed when Allied bombers unexpectedly flew over the city and rained destruction on the 'Florence of the Elbe'. "Nobody thought they were going to blow the place. Everyone thought they were going to bomb Leipzig but up come these bloody lights floating about in the sky so that was it. We knew we'd had it because these lights were right over our heads and then the incendiaries came down, smashed through the roof and killed all these blokes who were standing underneath it."

He witnessed first-hand some of the terrifying explosives the Allied bombers were spilling down on the city, including the POWs crammed in their

make-shift holding pen. "They were all burned to death because with the incendiary, whatever was in them, you couldn't put it out. Whatever you put against it, the clothes caught alight. They were screaming their heads off and the burning flesh stunk. After a lull of five to six minutes with these things coming down you hear another roar and things beginning to shake and it's the force of all the aeroplanes in the sky, about six hundred of them come over, drop their lot and after about 25 minutes... things were just dying down and then this big bomb comes down and goes off by the building, smashing the wall in. That's when Harry got his lot and that's when I got out of there. Out into the bonfire."

With his friend dead, Gregg escaped outside and the surrounding chaos engulfing Dresden appalled him: "It was the first time that I'd ever become aware there were other people suffering besides soldiers. 'Suffering' was hardly a word when you see women and children alight floating through the air. The wind was about 200-300 miles per hour, tornadoes, to rush in the air that the fire was consuming. You lose all sense of time." Utterly shocked by these scenes, Gregg helped rescue teams work through the charred remains of Dresden. "We got picked up by this German fire-

fighting crew and I spent the next three or so days trying to get these shelters unlocked and then see all the people, or what's left of them. There wasn't a lot to clear up in the majority of cases because what's left was a sort of jelly substance left on the floor, which is all their fat and everything's melted. Unless you've actually seen it... I think it's impossible... to sink in. I survived because of luck."

Dresden traumatised Gregg for many years afterwards, and is certain whom he holds ultimately responsible: "I don't blame the bomber pilots so much because they were putting their lives on the line every time they got in the plane. Let's face it, the damage they were doing was six miles below them. You can fire a rifle at a bloke say 600-800 yards and not feel too much about it. I don't really blame [Bomber] Harris. I blame Churchill and everyone else who was involved... I blame the lot of them."

"I BLAME CHURCHILL AND EVERYONE ELSE WHO WAS INVOLVED... I BLAME THE LOT OF THEM"



Residents of the city, including a mother and her twins, sit petrified after the firestorm had faded



Gregg does not blame the bomber pilots for the attack but politicians like Winston Churchill, who encouraged the bombing of German cities



The attack on Dresden destroyed over 12,000 buildings and killed between 22,000-25,000 civilians though some German sources claimed over 200,000 people had been killed

in front had rifles, all the rest had nothing, but there were so many of them that you couldn't envisage anyone stopping them. This was the Red Army in full force." He also discovered that atrocities were not confined to the Nazis: "The Russian officers mistreated their own men. If the men argued, they'd shoot them. They were trigger happy... I got into a big city the night that Churchill broadcast to say the war was over. We were indoors but there was looting and raping and Christ knows what else outside." After this post-victory horror, the Russians pushed further west: "A couple of days after that they go forward again and come to this river. On the other side are all the Allies so they're going over meeting each other on rubber dinghies and I'm there on the back of a motorbike and whizzed away. And that was it, over. The war was finished."

Demobilisation

Gregg was quickly returned to the British Army but he did not receive a warm welcome from his superiors, who interrogated him about his time with the Russians: "People tried to talk down to me and I just ignored them. One silly sod – an officer – kept on at me, 'Why did you go east? Why didn't you go west?' And I got fed up with him and I threw a chair over and walked out. But then two days later I was put on a plane and I went home. I was sent down to Plymouth and put in the Royal Artillery of all things and sent up to this prison place on the edge of Dartmoor."

As a regular soldier, Gregg wanted to complete his service. However he found himself demobilised due to his involvement in the Red Army – a small sign of the impending Cold War. Gregg found the demobilisation process depressingly swift: "We went in one end of the shed with our army

kit on. There was all this civvie stuff so we picked it out and went to another part of the shed where we changed. We come out of that place onto the train and off to Paddington and that was it." On the train journey home Gregg threw his kitbag out of the carriage window. His military service was at an end.

By any measure, Gregg's war record is outstanding and far longer than most. He witnessed, experienced – and most importantly survived – virtually everything that the war could throw at him. Now he has written several books about his life he is very aware what he went through during the war was not ordinary: "You tell people about it but there's no way you expect them to believe it but that's the truth. The reason I'm able to do all this writing is that I don't have to invent anything. I haven't got to invent characters; I haven't got to try to find a location. All I've got to do is think what happened and it comes out. It's because I've experienced it all. Then you begin to understand what it's done to you."

Gregg ended his war scarred and disillusioned and remains convinced that conflict does not solve anything: "To me it was a just war. What it turned into in the end was something entirely different, this is the point. The war started out and we didn't have anything to fight with. These people who had been to Eton and Harrow believed that all they had to do was declare war and that would sort it, but of course it didn't work out like that."

Having perhaps experienced more of the last century's most devastating war than anyone else writing today, he is also in the unique

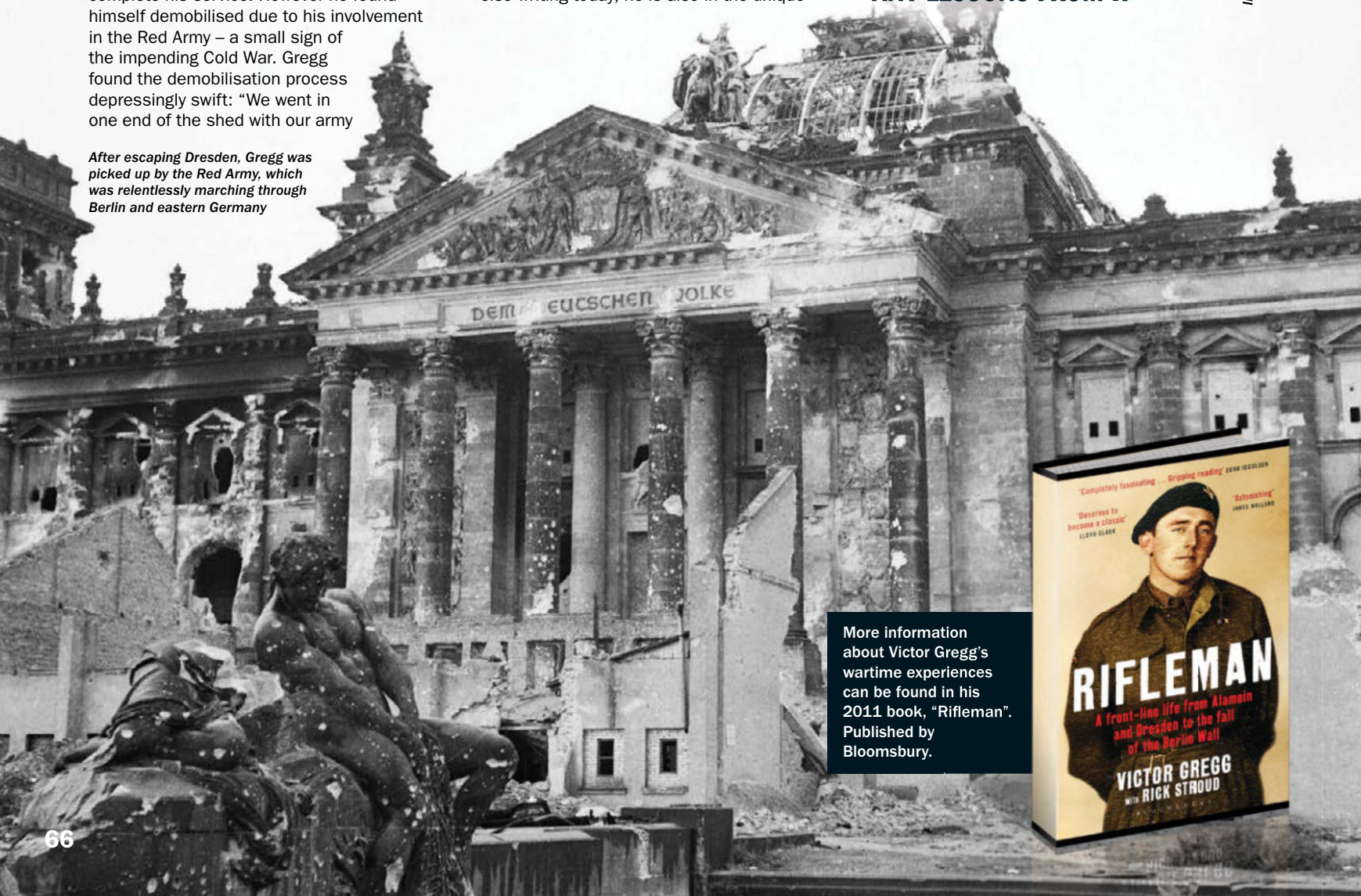
Gregg became a critically acclaimed author when he published his first book 'Rifleman' in 2011 about his war service

position of reflecting on how it has changed the shape of the world in the last 70 years. "I never thought the war was worth it afterwards because we didn't learn any lessons from it... We had six years of war and they're still sending these shells where there are women, children, old people. We think nothing of it, the Arabs think nothing of it, the Americans think nothing of it. Nobody wins in a war."

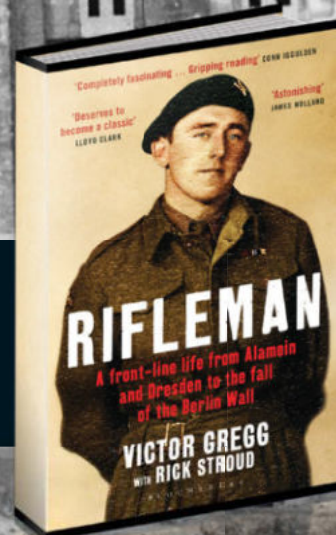
"I NEVER THOUGHT THE WAR WAS WORTH IT AFTERWARDS BECAUSE WE DIDN'T LEARN ANY LESSONS FROM IT"


Images: Alamy; Getty

After escaping Dresden, Gregg was picked up by the Red Army, which was relentlessly marching through Berlin and eastern Germany



More information about Victor Gregg's wartime experiences can be found in his 2011 book, "Rifleman". Published by Bloomsbury.





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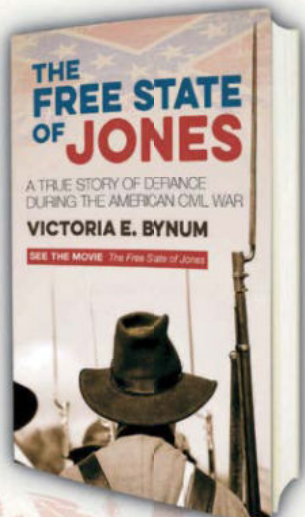
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Heroes of the Victoria Cross

HORACE MARTINEAU

At the Siege of Mafeking, one young Londoner's heroics made him a darling of the Empire's elite. At least while it suited them...

WORDS NICK SOLDINGER

In the early hours of Boxing Day, 1899, 25-year-old Sergeant Horace Martineau found himself part of an assault force of about 60 men heading out of the besieged South African town of Mafeking to attack the Boer lines. The mission's objective was to seize Game Tree Hill Fort – a Boer-held stronghold to the north of the town. When a brief artillery barrage against the fort ended around 5am, two squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment assaulted the building only to discover they were effectively facing an impregnable blockhouse, with eight-foot-high walls and three tiers of loop holes for the defending Boers to fire at them.

As bullets buzzed about them, the British colonial troops charged the fort with fixed bayonets. Some managed to reach its walls and fire in through the loopholes. Most, however, were scythed down. Before long it was clear the attack had failed, and the few who had survived were ordered to withdraw. Among them was Martineau, but as he began his escape, he saw a comrade, Corporal Charles Le Camp, writhing and bloodied on the ground ten yards from the Boer position. So he went back for him.

Under heavy fire, Martineau half-dragged, half-carried the wounded corporal back towards their own lines. Despite being shot in the side, he managed to reach the cover of a bush 150 yards from the fort, where he tended to Le Camp's wounds. He then hoisted him up again and struggled on but was shot a second time and slumped into the dust.

Both men were eventually rescued alive and brought back into Mafeking for medical treatment. Here, at Victoria Hospital, Martineau's left arm – which had been

shattered by a Boer bullet – was amputated. By then the Siege of Mafeking was in its 73rd day and, with the overcrowded hospital seriously short of medical supplies, it's almost certain Martineau's arm would have been hacked off without proper anaesthetic.

Martineau, though, was lucky to survive that day. Of the 60 men dispatched to Game Tree Hill Fort, an estimated 24 were killed, 23 were wounded and three were registered as missing in action. It had been an impossible mission that was always doomed to failure, so why had it ever been sanctioned?

By the time Mafeking's garrison commander (and future founder of the Scout Movement), Colonel Robert Baden-Powell, dreamt the mission up, the Siege of Mafeking was three months old, and was making headlines around

Below: A 94-pounder Creusot 'Long Tom' firing at British positions during the siege of Mafeking. The siege lasted from October 1899 to May 1900



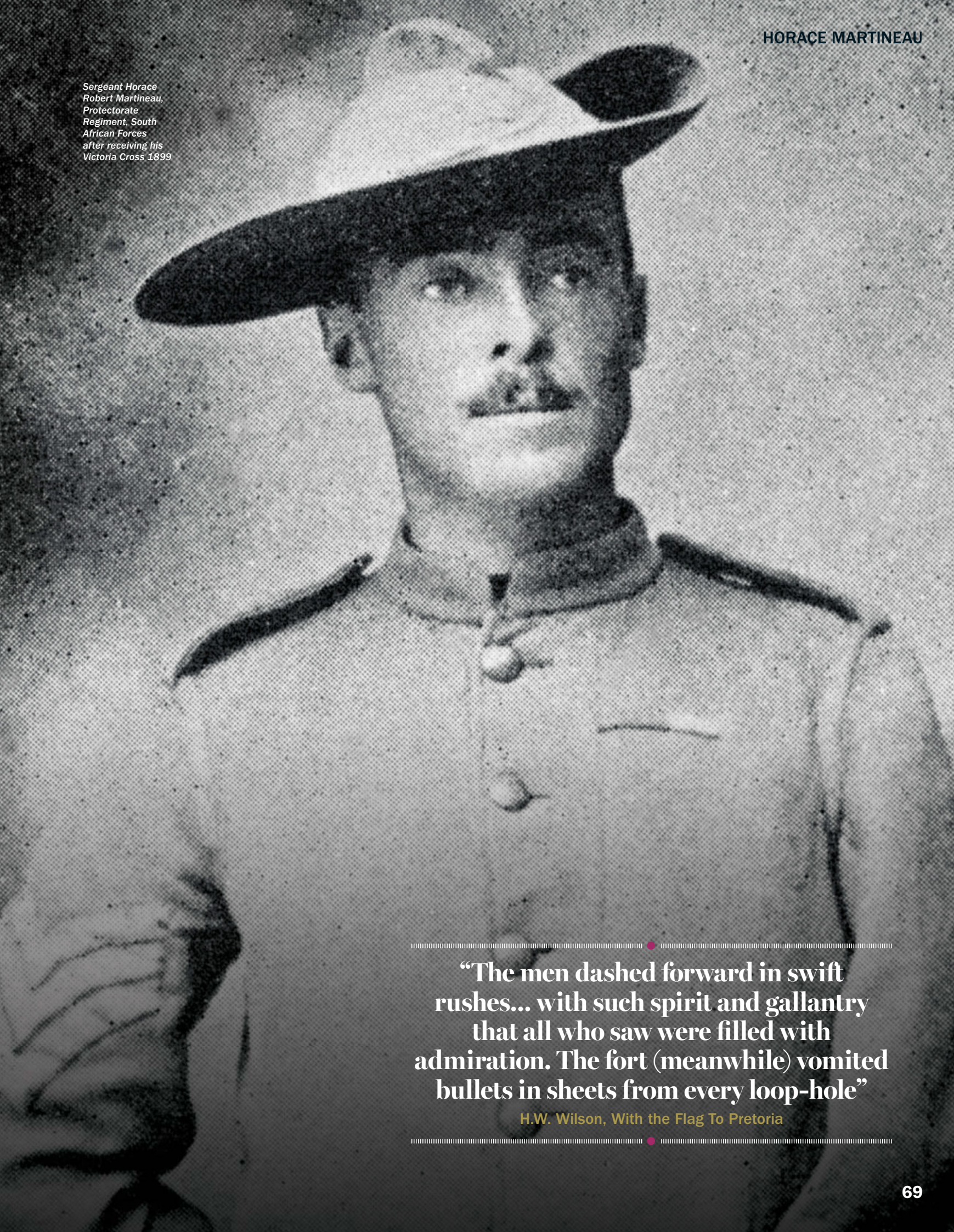
the world. Perfectly spun by the British Imperial propaganda machine, it was told as a tale of plucky patriotic heroism. Baden-Powell – or B-P as the Press dubbed him – and his gallant little force of 1,500 were holding out against an army of 7,000 brutish Boers under colonial skies. It was the type of ripping yarn that would inspire an entire generation of schoolboys to enthusiastically march off into the meat grinder of World War I just 15 years later.

The truth is, however, that the Mafeking campaign was the greatest deception of the Second Boer War. At the start of the conflict, which was instigated by Britain after the discovery of huge gold reserves in the Boer lands of the Transvaal, British Imperial territory in the Southern Cape was vulnerable to attack. So, Baden-Powell's small force was sent to Mafeking (a railway town of limited strategic significance on the Transvaal's northwestern borders) to cause a diversion. Baden-Powell's force was never big enough to pose a serious problem to the Boers in that region, but it was instructed to make a nuisance of itself and through a series of feints and raids to give the impression it was a tangible threat.

Initially these raids were successful, persuading the Boers that the capture of Mafeking was a military priority, but the fiasco on Boxing Day proved so costly it was the last one the British attempted. Instead, for the next five months B-P's troops stoically sat behind Mafeking's defences being blasted and starved out. When the siege was eventually broken after 217 days, over 800 of the 1,500 men Baden-Powell had marched into Mafeking had been killed or wounded.

Among these wounded, of course, was Horace Martineau, who was about to become

Sergeant Horace
Robert Martineau,
Protectorate
Regiment, South
African Forces
after receiving his
Victoria Cross 1899



“The men dashed forward in swift
rushes... with such spirit and gallantry
that all who saw were filled with
admiration. The fort (meanwhile) vomited
bullets in sheets from every loop-hole”

H.W. Wilson, *With the Flag To Pretoria*

“The scene here was immensely pathetic, and everywhere there were dead or dying men... The uncouth Boars made some attempt to rob the wounded and despoil the dead”

Angus Hamilton, *The London Times*

a celebrity. In the wake of Mafeking's relief, Imperial Britain's PR machine went into overdrive: there were flag-waving processions in London and Baden-Powell was promoted to national-hero status. As such, any tactical errors he'd made during the great siege were to be given a positive spin for their retelling. The attack on Game Tree Hill Fort had been a fiasco, but the public couldn't be told that. Instead it was sold to them as another glorious example of courage and self-sacrifice by British soldiers. Soldiers like Horace Martineau.

Within seven weeks of Mafeking's relief, Martineau was told that he was to receive the Victoria Cross for his part in the calamitous attack. Almost a year to the day that his arm had been hacked off, Martineau was whisked to Cape Town where he had the medal pinned to his chest by the Chief of the British Forces in South Africa, Lord Roberts. His photo was taken, his exploits reported in the Press, his likeness was even reproduced on cigarette cards. Horace Martineau had become a poster boy for the British Empire. For the time being, at least.

By 1914, Martineau found himself in New Zealand. Now 40 years old, he'd been serving the British Empire one way or another for nearly 25 years. Having been born into a middle-class family in 1874, he'd abandoned his education at the age of 16, joining the British army as a lowly cavalry trooper. After buying his way out in 1895, he'd then served with various militias – including Baden-Powell's – in Africa almost ever since. With the outbreak of World War I it was almost inevitable that such a patriotic and adventurous character would offer to do his duty one more time.

Despite his disability, a one-armed war hero was too dazzling a prospect to turn down for an Empire then promoting the biggest military recruitment drive in history. Martineau was given a commission in the Royal New Zealand Infantry Brigade as a junior officer and, after the inevitable flurry of Press interest, found himself on a troop ship bound for the Gallipoli Peninsula in southern Turkey.

The Gallipoli Campaign, which saw the Allies land thousands of troops on Turkey's coastline, is one of history's most infamous. A combination of incompetence, political rivalry, and poor military planning ensured that it was one of the most costly, and ultimately pointless, battles of all time. It was also one of the most horrific. The fighting was conducted with machine guns, artillery and bayonets in rat-infested trench systems much like those on the Western Front, but in temperatures that often soared past 24°C.

The piles of corpses left in No Man's Land that remained unburied, cooked in the blazing

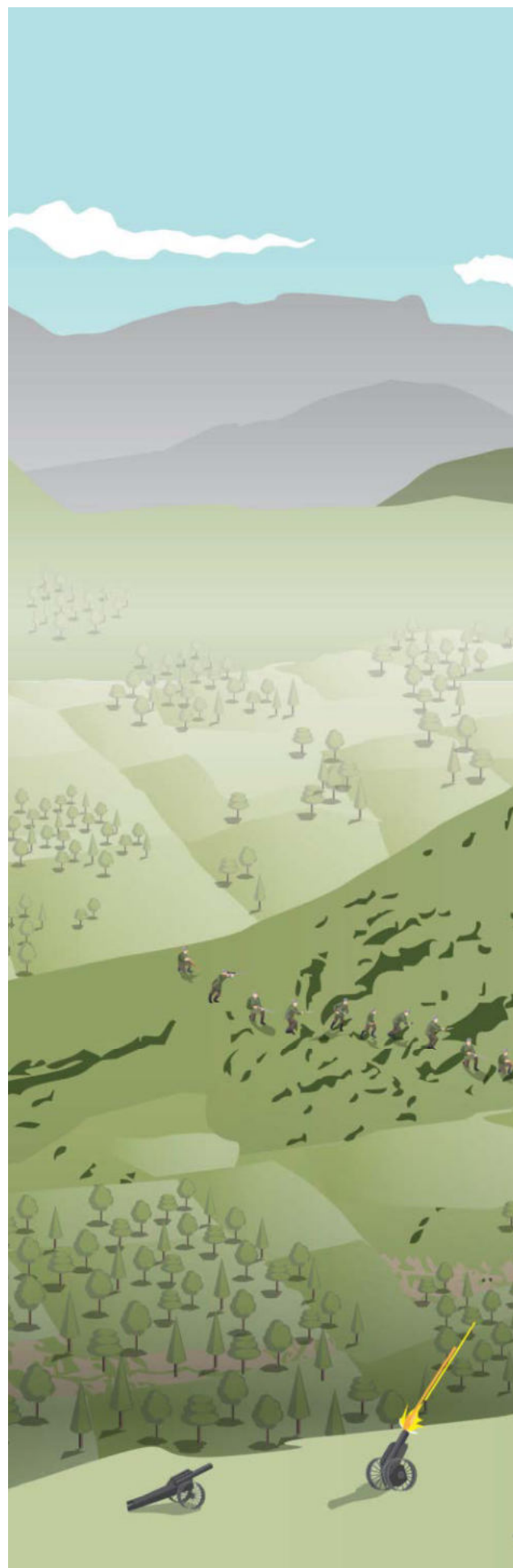
Turkish sun, bloating until they burst. Swarms of flies would then feast on their carcasses. These flies inevitably then found their way into the trenches where they'd swarm all over the living soldiers and their food. The epidemic spread of disease was inevitable, and in fact only twice during the whole campaign did the proportion of Allied troops being evacuated from that Front with battle wounds exceed the proportion being evacuated with some sort of illness. Dysentery, diarrhoea and enteric fever were all rife and within weeks of landing, Martineau had fallen foul of the unhygienic surroundings. Suffering from gastritis – a painful condition that erodes the stomach lining – he was evacuated to a hospital in Egypt.

It was here that Martineau's usefulness to the British Empire finally evaporated. On 7 September 1915, he was drinking in a café called the Pallotta Court in Alexandria, when he got into an argument with two young British officers. Apparently incensed by a reference to his missing arm, Martineau swore at them and threatened to hit them before being persuaded to leave the café.

The following morning, Martineau was placed under military arrest for public drunkenness. During the subsequent investigation into the incident, he admitted using insubordinate language to a superior officer. The one-armed war hero had now become a liability. In Britain's Edwardian army, with its rigid notions of class hierarchy, Martineau's behaviour was deemed wholly unacceptable. He'd insulted an English gentleman, and, although the Londoner was obviously English-born himself, after so many years living abroad he would have been regarded as little more than a lowly colonial – especially if he had picked up a South African accent along the way.

Martineau found himself on charges of insubordination. Not that he was to be given the right to a trial to prove his innocence – the publicity that would attract would be potentially too damaging to the Army's public image. On 21 September 1915, Brigadier-General McGregor sent a letter to General Headquarters at Mudros in Greece recommending that, as Martineau was in possession of the VC, “his services be dispensed with without trial and he be sent back to New Zealand.”

Martineau was quietly dishonourably discharged, on 1 January 1916, by which time he was back in New Zealand. Four months later, while an in-patient at Dunedin Hospital, he began vomiting blood. The gastritis he'd contracted in Gallipoli had escalated into a condition called hematemesis that had caused massive internal bleeding. He later died on 7 April 1916. Both his death, and subsequent funeral, went largely unreported.



03 Pinned down by enemy fire

Although some men reach the fort and fire through its loopholes, the majority of the British troops attacking it get pinned down in a 200-yard killing ground in front of it. When the assault commander Major Alexander Godley moves up in an armoured train he discovers Vernon and many others have been killed.

04 Martineau saves Le Camp

Despite being ordered to fall back, Martineau moves back up the hill towards the fort to rescue a wounded comrade Corporal Charles Le Camp. He half-draws, half-carries him back down the hillside under heavy fire. He's shot in the side but carries on undeterred.

02 The ground assault begins

Sergeant Horace Martineau's unit C Squadron of the Protectorate Regiment commanded by Captain Ronald James Vernon lead the charge up towards Game Tree Hill Fort under increasingly heavy fire from the Boer positions. The fighting is intense with most of the officers wiped out in the initial assault.

05 Martineau treats Le Camp's wounds

Using the scant cover of a bush 150 yards from the fort Martineau stops to dress Le Camp's wounds. He then carries him further back towards safety until two more bullet wounds finally floor him. Both men are later rescued alive although Martineau will need his wounded left arm amputated.

01 The initial bombardment

At 4.30am on 26 December 1899, in preparation for the ground assault that will attempt to capture it, Game Tree Hill Fort is shelled by British guns in Mafeking. This continues for half an hour but causes very little damage.

DE HAVILLAND DH98 MOSQUITO

WORDS & IMAGES NEILL WATSON

The Mosquito nearly wasn't built in its incarnation as an unarmed bomber, so the fighter version made production more attractive

Take a look inside Britain's small night bomber nicknamed the 'Wooden Wonder'

The origins of the De Havilland Mosquito can be traced back as far as 1936. Anticipating war, the Air Ministry in the United Kingdom issued a design requirement for a fast, high-altitude bomber capable of spending the minimum amount of time over enemy territory. The design called for a fast aircraft, capable of carrying a 4,000 pound bomb load over 3,000 miles at more than 250 miles per hour.

De Havilland was one of the aviation companies invited to tender, though at the time it was reluctant, as its civilian designs were selling quite well. By 1938, it was becoming apparent that war was almost inevitable in some form, so De Havilland visited the air ministry requirements again. The specification called for an all-aluminium, twin- or four-engine aircraft with fore and aft defensive armament and a high cruising speed.

"THE DESIGN CALLED FOR A FAST AIRCRAFT, CAPABLE OF CARRYING A 4,000 LB BOMB LOAD OVER 3,000 MILES AT MORE THAN 250 MILES PER HOUR"

Speed and agility
were the Mosquito's
principal defences

**"THE SPECIFICATION CALLED FOR AN ALL-ALUMINIUM,
TWIN- OR FOUR-ENGINE AIRCRAFT WITH FORE AND AFT
DEFENSIVE ARMAMENT AND A HIGH CRUISING SPEED"**

Below: Full scale Mosquito production
didn't commence until 1941



DH98 MOSQUITO

CREW: 2: PILOT BOMBARDIER/NAVIGATOR
LENGTH: 44 FT 6 IN (13.57 M)
WINGSPAN: 54 FT 2 IN (16.52 M)
LOADED WEIGHT: 18,100 LB (8,210 KG)
POWERPLANT: 2 × ROLLS-ROYCE MERLIN 76/77 LIQUID-COOLED V12 ENGINE, 1,710 HP (1,280 KW)
MAXIMUM SPEED: 361 KN (415 MPH (668 KM/H) AT 28,000 FT (8,500 M)
RANGE: 1,300 NMI (1,500 MI/2,400 KM) WITH FULL WEAPONS LOAD
SERVICE CEILING: 37,000 FT (11,000 M)
RATE OF CLIMB: 2,850 FT/MIN (14.5 M/S)
ARMAMENT FIGHTER: 4 × HISPANO 20MM CANNON, 4 × BROWNING MACHINE GUNS
ARMAMENT BOMBER: 4,000 LB (1,800 KG)

DESIGN

In the 1930s, the De Havilland Albatross civilian airliner was proving to be a fast and efficient aircraft. A four-engine, all-wood composite monoplane, its clean design and light weight gave it a very fast cruising speed.

De Havilland's proposal, named DH98, was to sacrifice all armament and concentrate on the smoothest, most aerodynamic aircraft possible to simply outrun enemy defences. Drawing on winning experience with the Comet racer in the 1920s, the twin-engine design for the DH98 Mosquito was put forward. The preferred engine was the brand-new Rolls Royce Merlin, but radial-engine Hercules and H-engine Sabre options were also considered.

As you may imagine, the lack of any defensive armament was not popular with the Royal Air Force and initial design proposals were rejected out of hand. In July 1938, Geoffrey De Havilland wrote a letter to his contacts at the Air Ministry proposing the argument for all-wood construction and light weight. He stated that in all but torsion, wood matched aluminium and steel in strength and weight. If war were to break out suddenly,

metals would become scarce, while wood was in plentiful supply. Additionally, if required, existing carpentry skills of a British workforce could be pressed into service to increase production without specialist metalworking skills.

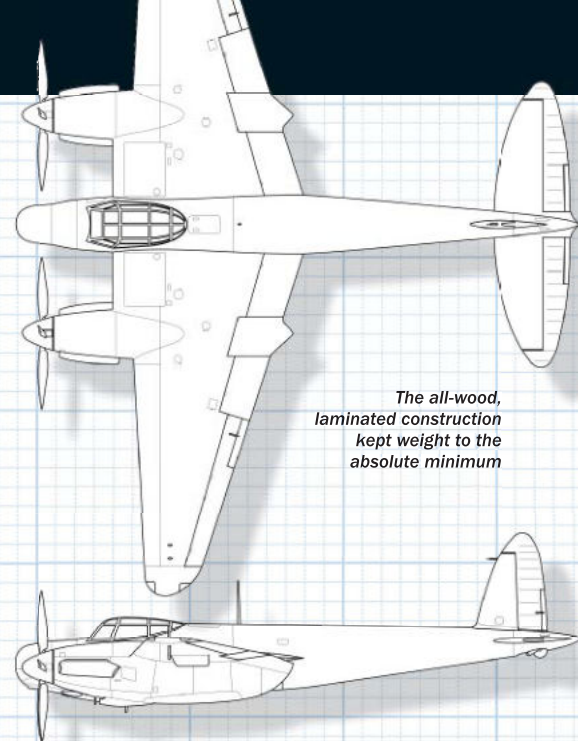
De Havilland also claimed that the specification would need to be changed and suggested that a sacrifice of either payload or range was needed. He suggested shortening the range to 1,500 miles and proposed a smaller, even lighter twin-engine aircraft with a crew of just two: pilot and navigator.

The design flew in the face of conventional policy at the time, which was one of heavily armed bombers with larger crews manning gun turrets, fighting their way to a target. Resistance by the Royal Air Force to an unarmed bomber was strong and though a prototype was commissioned, it was not put into large-scale production. Only when the Air Ministry issued a requirement for a fast twin-engine fighter, which the Mosquito could easily be adapted for, did the project finally gain momentum. By designating the DH98 as a reconnaissance/bomber aircraft, the armament issue was sidestepped for a while.

Having the fighter version of the DH98 probably kept the project alive. By 1940, the aircraft had still not been given full-scale approval, with Geoffrey De Havilland making a bold promise of delivering 50 aircraft in a very short space of time, gambling that once the aircraft was proven, more orders would follow.

Test flying throughout 1941 proved that the aircraft far exceeded the original design requirements. Even in initial tests, the prototype outpaced a Spitfire at 6,000 feet. At high altitude, above 30,000 feet, a maximum speed of 388 miles per hour was achieved, with a calculated service ceiling of 33,900 feet.

Left: The cockpit was a tight fit for the crew of two – one sat slightly back from the other for space



The all-wood, laminated construction kept weight to the absolute minimum

“TEST FLYING THROUGHOUT 1941 PROVED THAT THE AIRCRAFT FAR EXCEEDED THE ORIGINAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS”

Up-rated Merlin engines also became available, which gave the aircraft a top speed of no less than 439 miles per hour, making it the world's fastest operational aircraft at the time.

Demonstrations in front of all Allied air force chiefs proved the performance and agility of the aircraft, demonstrating climbing rolls overhead on only one engine. De Havilland received orders for the aircraft and production commenced in 1941.



The construction was unique for such a high performance aircraft

"TWO OF THE SUPERCHARGED, 27-LITRE V12 ENGINES WERE FITTED, DRIVING THREE-BLADED CONSTANT SPEED PROPELLERS"

Despite its size, twin supercharged Merlin engines gave the Mosquito more speed than a Spitfire

POWERPLANT

The final engine choice was De Havilland's first option of the Rolls Royce Merlin. Two of the supercharged, 27-litre V12 engines were fitted, driving three-bladed constant speed propellers. Various versions of the famous Merlin were fitted throughout the aircraft's production. As newer and more powerful versions were introduced, they were made available to the Mosquito production and ensured its superior performance advantage was maintained.



ARMAMENT

Though initially designed as an unarmed bomber, the long-range fighter variant proved to be highly effective. Four Browning machine guns were mounted in the nose, supplemented by four Hispano 20mm cannon in the fuselage belly. As a night fighter, it had early generation airborne radar fitted. The combination of radar, weaponry, speed and range enabled the fighter version to attack far-off German airfields, while also defending the skies at night over the UK.

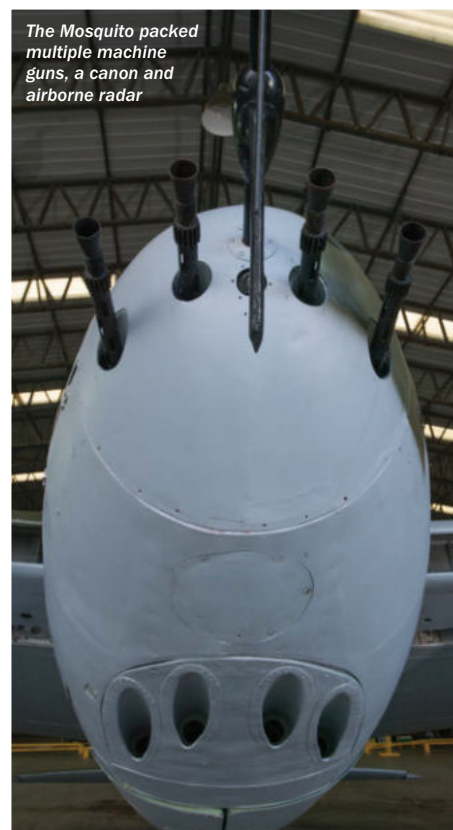
The bomber variant and also photo reconnaissance versions were both unarmed. Crews grew to love the high-altitude performance and agility as they gained confidence in being able to outrun and out manoeuvre the opposition.

The fully enclosed bay carried 4,000 pounds of bombs, either as a cluster of smaller bombs, or later as a single, thin cased 4,000 pound 'cookie' bomb. Photo reconnaissance versions carried a selection of cameras and were often used ahead of both day and night bomber missions over Europe to check weather conditions.



Above: The Mosquito bomb bay carried a variety of explosives

The Mosquito packed multiple machine guns, a canon and airborne radar



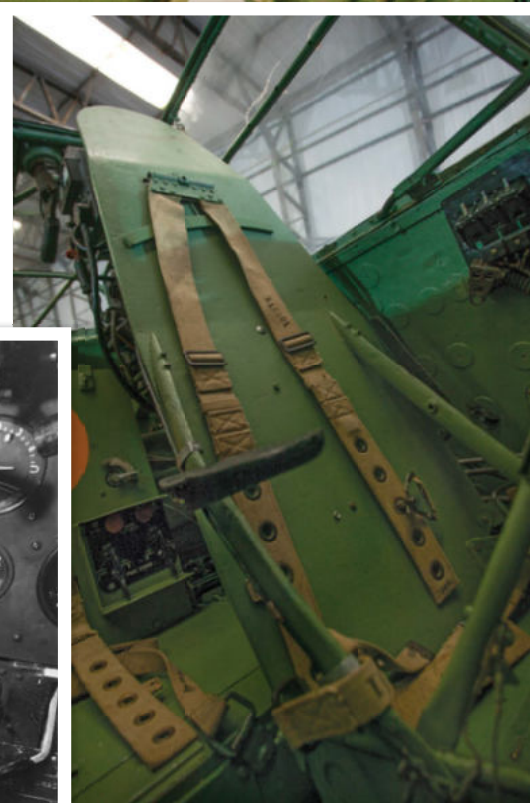
"FIGHTER VERSIONS HAD A SOLID NOSE, WHILE BOMBER VARIANTS FEATURED A GLASS NOSE TO ALLOW THE CREWMAN TO USE THE NORDEN BOMB SIGHT"



The crew of two had very little room inside the cramped cockpit

COCKPIT

The machine carried a crew of two in quite a small area, with the pilot sat on the left and the second crew member on the right and slightly behind, giving more shoulder and elbow room. The second crewman would undertake a variety of duties, including navigation, bomb aiming and operation of the night fighter radar. Fighter versions had a solid nose, while bomber variants featured a glass nose to allow the crewman to use the Norden bomb sight and deliver the bomb load on target.



Above: The pilot's seat featured an armour-plated headrest
Left: Different models had either control column or fighter control stick



Below: Mosquitos were vital for gaining intelligence on photo reconnaissance missions

The solid-nosed Mosquito housed radar and weapons



IN SERVICE

Mosquitos became famous for several daring, high-profile raids over enemy territory including the raid on the Gestapo headquarters in Oslo, Norway, requiring flight across the North Sea at less than 100 feet. The raid was subsequently dramatised into the post-war film '633 Squadron'.

In 1944, Mosquitos were engaged in Operation Jericho, a very low-level raid with the objective of breaching the walls of Amiens prison, freeing French resistance fighters and other German-held prisoners who were all due to be executed. The raid became controversial after the war but as a demonstration of low-level precision bombing, it was a propaganda coup at the time.

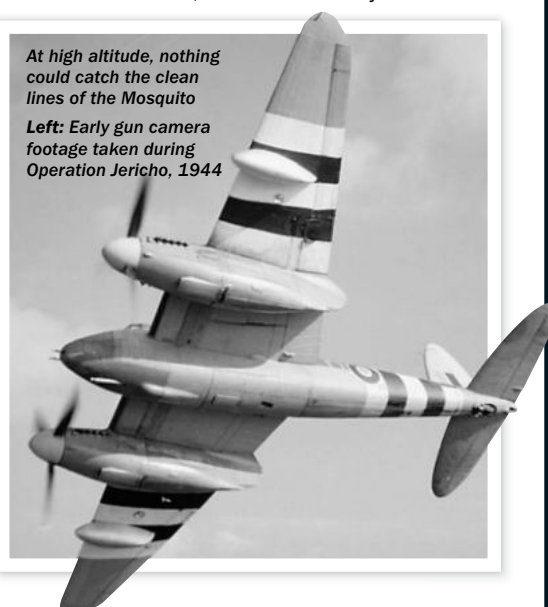
The most famous role of Mosquitos was as Pathfinder bombers, flying ahead of the main bomber force and marking the target with flares and incendiary bombs. The crews often had to remain over the target to monitor the success of the main force, sometimes repeatedly marking the target while under fire to ensure the bomber force was accurate.

As a night fighter, the Mosquito carried early generation airborne radar to intercept German bombers. Radar technology was pioneered in World War II and as equipment

became more portable, it could be fitted into aircraft like the Mosquito. Several British pilots became night fighter aces, including Group Captain John Cunningham, named 'Cat's Eyes Cunningham' by the British press in an attempt to disguise the airborne technology. As the war progressed, Mosquitos flew night fighter offensive missions over Germany, actively seeking out their German counterparts in the darkness.

Mosquitos were also used during the war to obtain ball bearings from neutral Sweden. These aircraft were given civilian registration marks and ostensibly flown by British Overseas Airways Corporation, with pilots wearing civilian clothing. Ball bearings were vital for the war effort and the Mosquito bomb bays were loaded in Stockholm and flown to Scotland, BOAC becoming known as the Ball Bearing Airline. They also regularly carried British newspapers and magazines outbound, plus espionage experts or escaped airmen back to the UK who had escaped across the borders into neutral Sweden.

The performance advantage of the Mosquito remained throughout its service life, only being replaced by the advent of the jet age aircraft in the years after World War II. Today just a handful of aircraft remain, with two airworthy.



At high altitude, nothing could catch the clean lines of the Mosquito
Left: Early gun camera footage taken during Operation Jericho, 1944

THE SCOURGE OF EUROPE

WORDS PETER WOLFGANG PRICE

By the 4th century, the Hunnic horde turned its attention to the Western Roman Empire, intent on conquest and plunder



By 376, Rome was in a sorry state, a shadow of its former glory. The Eastern and Western empires found hosts of barbarians appearing on their borders, with Huns quite suddenly spilling out of the eastern Steppes of Asia and pushing westwards of the Black Sea. This movement disrupted many of the barbarian peoples along the way, such as the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Alans and Vandals who were settled in Eastern Europe, driving them towards the Romans borders.

Ironically, however, the Huns would first cross swords with the Romans as mercenaries, employed by the very people who were running from them: the Goths. These forces soon overran the border defences of the empire to the extent that hostile armies roved unchecked across the plains of Eastern Europe like the 'ashes of Mount Etna'.

In 395, the Huns launched the first of many assaults on the Eastern Roman Empire. At this time they were not a unified force, but rather a host of war bands and petty chieftains out for personal glory and plunder. This would change when a man named Attila, and his brother Bleda, seized command in 434. The Huns proceeded to cut a bloody swathe through Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. So great was the slaughter, that the dead were said to be countless and accounts speak of Attila, astride his horse, laughing at the destruction wrought in his name.

With the east suitably pacified, Attila turned his gaze toward the Western Empire, the other major power in Europe. The most accepted catalyst for the impending invasion came in a strange guise. Honoria, sister to Emperor Valentinian III, had been locked away in seclusion after a torrid love affair had seen her partner executed. For this punishment she was determined to make trouble for her brother, so in 450 she smuggled a message and her ring to Attila, asking that he become her champion. Attila took this invitation as a marriage proposal and requested that the dowry be half the Western Empire.

This was probably just a ploy to give his invasion an air of legitimacy and upon discovering what his sister had done, Emperor Valentinian sent messages to Attila explaining the mistake. He stated that the marriage, and substantial dowry, were not on the negotiating table. Upon hearing this, Attila marched into Gaul with a massive force, anywhere from 200,000 to 700,000 men. While these numbers seem fancifully large, the number of men the Huns brought to bear would have been massive for 5th century Europe. The men who marched with Attila were not just Huns, however, as the army boasted a mix of allied barbarian tribes including Ostrogoths, Gepids and Franks.

The early tactics of the Huns, like the Mongols who would come hundreds of years after, were a revelation to European warfare. Horsemen would unleash flights of arrows, followed by cavalry charges, running rings around the heavy infantry favoured by the Romans. However, the Hunnic war machine would evolve when it reached Roman territory. The plains of Europe were not as large as the Steppes and simply could not provide enough grazing ground for all the Hunnic horses. This meant the Huns were forced to make a shift towards a more conventional field army as they marched westwards.

Attila's exploits in the East had solidified his reputation for cruelty. Before advancing on Gaul in 443, he had turned his attention towards the city of Naissus on the river Danube. The Huns descended and devastated the city and surrounding area, but not before massacring the entire population. The death and destruction was on such a massive scale that Roman ambassadors, who were passing through several years later to meet with Attila, found the riverbanks were still filled with human bones. The stench of death and decay was so overpowering that no one would enter the city.

Attila's formidable force burned its way across Gaul laying waste to many towns; Strasbourg, Metz, Cologne, Amiens and Reims all fell to the advancing armies. These

A dismounted Hunnic warrior and Gothic cavalryman clash ferociously on the battlefield



A feast held in Attila's palace. The man in white is Priscus, the Roman historian who provides us with an account of the Hunnic court

unfortunate cities were looted, burned and their populations slain – the Huns were not interested in settlement, showing that they were not like other nomadic invaders. However, they demonstrated great aptitude in siege warfare, possibly learned from conflicts with China or observed while employed as mercenaries in the Roman army. Their use of battering rams and rolling siege towers shocked the West to its core: here was a barbarian army that could not only trample Rome's legions in a pitched battle, but also crack open even the strongest fortified cities. Destruction on a massive scale swept across Europe, with cities like Paris being spared only because of their small and seemingly worthless size.

Standing against the onslaught that descended on Gaul was a military general and

statesman named Flavius Aetius, who would later be known as the 'last of the Romans'. A dominating influence over Valentinian III, Aetius had done all he could to hold the Roman world together after the numerous setbacks over the past few years. He was perhaps uniquely qualified to lead the counterattack, as he had previously been sent as a hostage to live among the Huns. With a knowledge of Hunnic life, an ability to speak their language and even experience hiring Hunnic mercenaries in military campaigns, Aetius possessed strong tactical knowledge of the Hunnic army.

The Roman general had been anticipating an invasion on the West from at least 443, so when the Huns began their assault almost a decade later, he was ready for it. Both Gaul and Italy were scourged for men fit for service, but these musters could not swell the ranks of the Roman army to the desired number. Rather than face Attila with a smaller force, he turned to the various barbarian peoples populating the empire who possessed both strong military forces and equally strong hatred of the Huns.

Aetius even reached out to the Visigoths, who had been in conflict with Rome ever since their appearance on the eastern borders of the empire. They might not have seemed the surest allies, but in a pragmatic move their king, Theodoric, and his son Thorismud saw that the Huns heralded a much bigger threat than Rome did and joined the alliance. Another group to join the alliance, the Burgundians, harboured a deep

Below: Renaissance medal showing a profile depiction of Attila with his title, 'The scourge of God', visible in Latin



resentment for the Huns, as in 437 CE, 20,000 of their people were slaughtered by an alliance of Huns and Romans. The Romans had extended the olive branch and settled them in territory west of Geneva. The Alans, settled in the area around Orleans, also joined the Romans but their loyalty was again questionable. In this way, Aetius spawned multiple alliances out of mutual necessity, not trust.

**“STANDING AGAINST THE
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THE INVASION OF GAUL

MEETING VERY LITTLE RESISTANCE AT FIRST, ATTLA WAS FREE TO SACK THE CITIES OF GAUL AT WILL

1. In 451, after receiving a message from Honoria, the Emperor's sister, Attila marches into Gaul to claim his dowry.
2. Many cities fall to the Huns as they utilise advanced siege warfare techniques. With no real opposition they manage to advance unchecked across the countryside.
3. Metz falls to the Huns in April. The Emperor looks on in horror as the population is subjected to looting, pillaging and wanton slaughter.
4. Paris is saved from destruction by being too small and not worth the time and effort of the Huns to capture it.
5. Lupus, the Bishop of Troyes, is said to have met Attila in person and pleaded that his city be saved. Allegedly impressed with his piety, the Hunnic leader decided to spare the city.
6. In June Attila reaches Orleans and quickly surrounds its walls. The relief force led by Flavius Aetius arrives and forces the Huns to abandon the siege.
7. Withdrawing to more favourable ground, Attila turns to meet the advancing Romans at the Catalaunian Plains. After a bloody battle he is forced to withdraw from Gaul.



Many depictions of the Huns focus on their violent and cruel nature

FLAGELLUM DEI

FEARED BY FOE AND ALLY ALIKE, ATILLA WAS A LEADER WHO WOULD LEAD THE HUNS ON A CONQUEST THAT SHOOK ROME TO ITS FOUNDATIONS

Attila, a man Christian scholars would come to call 'flagellum Dei', the scourge of God, was the most fearsome leader of the Huns. Usually interpreted as 'little father', the name reportedly was given by his grandfather who saw that the destiny of the Huns was in Attila's hands. Attila began ruling the Huns with his brother Bleda in 434.

To further solidify his rule and live up to his namesake, Attila 'found' the Sword of Mars, the Roman god of war. A shepherd tending his fields unearthed the blade and gifted it to Attila, who saw this as a sign from the gods to conquer the entire world. Gaining the sword is said to have made his brother Bleda 'resign his sceptre and his life', which he did in 445, said to have been murdered by Attila. Whether any of this is true is highly questionable but what is clear is that Attila had a powerful symbol on his side.

As a ruler Attila was hard and pragmatic, taking the Huns from their nomadic past to forge the Hunnic Empire into an all-conquering force. Mirroring the Romans, he built a fixed capital in modern-day Hungary to accommodate his court. He lived a Spartan existence, never overindulging in food or alcohol and dined on with simple wooden utensils. He left the feasting, carousing and fine living to his subordinates who ate off silver plates and drank from jewel encrusted goblets. For a man whose ambition devoured an empire, his death was rather ignoble, having choked to death on his own blood on his wedding night. Whether he was assassinated or was the victim of misfortune is still a mystery to this day.

"ATILLA WAS HARD AND PRAGMATIC, TAKING THE HUNS FROM THEIR NOMADIC PAST TO FORGE THE HUNNIC EMPIRE INTO AN ALL-CONQUERING FORCE"

SECRETS OF THE STEPPES

SHROUDED IN MYSTERY, THE ORIGINS AND PRACTICES OF THE HUNS ARE HARD TO DECIPHER

The Huns didn't record any of their own history, so we have to rely on mostly Roman proto-history sources for our information. Many early writers write damning accounts of the Huns, painting them as savages who wore rags, lived in the saddle, shunning fire and man-made shelter, and speaking in a harsh guttural tongue.

Most of these accounts are from men who had never seen a Hun and were written to be the complete antithesis of the Romans. To challenge this savage appearance, we can turn to a Roman named Priscus who spent time at Attila's court. What he found was not a collection of tents but a palace made of stone that could accommodate Attila's entire entourage. Here fine embroidery, made by the wives of Attila's warriors, was worn, complicated table etiquette was followed and entertainment came in the form of songs and poetry. This is hardly the typical image of a saddle dwelling nomad.

The Huns' nomadic origins are still a hot topic of discussion among scholars. A popular theory is that they were related to the Xiongnu, a Eurasian steppe people dating from c.300 BCE. These nomadic groups were adept with the bow and possessed great riding skills like the Huns but there has been recent archaeological evidence that negates this claim. It is most likely that the Huns originated from an area between the Altai Mountains and the Caspian sea, which is located around modern-day Kazakhstan.

"THE HUNS' NOMADIC ORIGINS ARE STILL A HOT TOPIC OF DISCUSSION AMONG SCHOLARS"

Below: The Huns hailed from the east but just how far is still debated



By June 451, Attila's marauding army reached Orleans – about 250 miles west of the Rhine – but was stopped in its tracks as Aetius's coalition finally caught up. With these forces bearing down, Attila decided to lift the siege on the city and fall back to more favourable terrain. He chose to meet the Romans on the Catalaunian plains somewhere between Chalons and Troyes. On the rolling green fields of Champagne, the two armies drew up battle lines, with Aetius deploying first, sending the Visigoths to anchor his right flank on some high ground. He then placed himself on the left flank, with the Alans under their leader, Sangiban, in the centre where both he and Theodoric could ensure his loyalty.

In response, Attila marched to meet the alliance in the afternoon so that should the battle drag on, the setting sun would be in the eyes of his enemies and provide a distraction. He stationed himself and his crack Hun troops in the centre of the line, leaving his flanks secured by his Ostrogoth allies. The first day saw fierce fighting around the Visigoth position, as they threw the Huns back from the hill time and again. Heavily armoured cavalry were key in this clash, enabling the Goths to hold the high ground. Disaster would strike, however, as Theodoric fell in the battle. Accounts of his death are, like all accounts of the battle, confused; he was either struck by a spear or trampled to death when he fell from his horse leading a charge.

In the centre of the battle the Huns fared better, routing the Alans and the Roman

centre line. Losses on either side mounted up so high that the centre of the battlefield ran red with blood. One chronicler recounts that the "fight grew fierce, confused, monstrous, unrelenting... like no ancient time has ever recorded". In an attempt to end the slaughter, the Gothic cavalry charged Attila's household unit, coming dangerously close to killing the Hunnic leader and forcing him to retire from the battle. The Huns retreated to their camp and fortified it with wagons, subjecting any who came near to volleys of arrows.

After withdrawing, Attila set about building a funeral pyre made of saddles, resolving to take his own life in the flames rather than suffer the ignominy of defeat or surrender. However, his generals managed to persuade him that the retreat was a tactical one and he relented. After a tense standoff, the two sides struck their camps and left. While an accurate casualty list does not exist, both the Roman

"ATTILA SET ABOUT BUILDING A FUNERAL PYRE MADE OF SADDLES, RESOLVING TO TAKE HIS OWN LIFE IN THE FLAMES RATHER THAN SUFFER THE IGNOMINY OF DEFEAT OR SURRENDER"



With the death of his father, Thorismud was crowned king of the Visigoths at the battle of Catalaunian Plains

and Hunnic armies had suffered enormous losses. Although this was a setback for Attila, his military might was far from broken. The Huns had been bloodied; Attila's aura of invincibility was shattered, revealing him to be but a human.

Despite having his enemy on the back foot, Aetius could not deal the hammer blow to the Huns, the paradox being that for the continued survival of Roman Gaul, Attila needed to stay alive. Attila's death at this time would have brought about a severe succession crisis that might have heralded a fresh attack upon Gaul, which wasn't something it could withstand, especially after the battle. The Western Empire simply did not have the manpower to manage the flow of refugees fleeing from the Hunnic Empire and counter the Goth advances from southwest France.

Another reason is that since the Huns – the common enemy of both the Romans and Goths – had been defeated, Aetius was keen to break up his coalition force as soon as possible, lest his allies decide to take advantage of Rome's weakened state. Luckily for Aetius Thorismud, the newly crowned king of the Visigoths wanted to return to Toulouse as fast as possible to shore up his claim and secure his kingdom. With his pride wounded, Attila withdrew from Gaul and turned his attention to Italy. Aetius had succeeded in driving the Hun from Gaul, but was once more called to action to save the Western Empire from enemies much closer to home.

END OF AN EMPIRE

CRIPPLED BY INTERNAL POLITICS AND CENTURIES OF WORLD DOMINANCE, THE ROMAN EMPIRE WAS WEAKENED AND UNPREPARED TO SURVIVE THE BARBARIAN MIGRATION

Rome had changed much from its glory days under rulers like Caesar and Augustus. The fracturing of the Empire into its Eastern and Western sections in 379 was the start of the slow decline of this once mighty imperial power. Perhaps one of the most obvious signs of this was that in the West the city of Rome itself was no longer the centre of power, with the seat of government and capital being moved to Milan and then Ravenna. Rome stood as a crumbling mausoleum to the achievements of its pre-Christian past, now resigned to the pages of history rather than lived out.

The primary catalyst for this change was the influx of barbarian peoples from the east, many of whom were fleeing the Hunnic advance, who chose to either settle or make war with the Romans in what is called the *volkerwanderung*, or great migration. Being martial peoples it did not take long for peoples like the Visigoths, Ostrogoths

and Vandals to be employed as mercenaries and later regulars in Rome's military.


The Roman army of the 5th century was very different in appearance and composition than the armies of 'classic' Rome. The heavy infantry that had served in the legions so well in the past were proving extremely vulnerable to Gothic cavalry and were crushed in engagements such as the battle of Arbogast. In reaction, they shed their heavy armour and adopted lighter protection that greatly increased mobility across the battlefield.

“ROME STOOD AS A CRUMBLING MAUSOLEUM TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ITS PRE-CHRISTIAN PAST”



Hunnic soldiers pause to loot and sack a Roman villa during their advance through Gaul

Images: Alamy, Jose Cabrera

A photograph showing a person in the foreground wearing a white turban and a mask that covers their face, leaving only their eyes visible. They are holding a large, pointed wooden stick. In the background, there is a large fire burning brightly, and another person's face is partially visible in the shadows. The scene appears to be a protest or a demonstration.

A masked man protests the mysterious death of a prominent JKLF member's relative in mysterious circumstances, in the Kashmiri capital Srinagar

“EVERY YEAR SINCE 1990 – SIX YEARS AFTER SEPARATIST LEADER MOHAMMED MAQBOOL BHAT WAS HANGED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF AN INDIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER – STRIKES AND PROTESTS CONTINUED TO COMMEMORATE HIS EXECUTION”

Carnage in Kashmir

A disputed territory divided between China, India and Pakistan, with a population torn between Hinduism and Islam, Kashmir has witnessed insurgency, terrorism and even a nuclear stand-off

WORDS TOM FARRELL

The streets of Kashmir's capital, Srinagar, were largely devoid of traffic and business on 11 February 2016. Every year since 1990 – six years after separatist leader Mohammed Maqbool Bhat was hanged in connection with the death of an Indian intelligence officer – strikes and protests continued to commemorate his execution. Although there is talk of renewed dialogue between India and Pakistan, this anniversary was marked by the descent of hundreds of police and paramilitary units onto the streets of Srinagar and other towns, along with numerous separatist leaders being placed under house arrest.

The state of Jammu-Kashmir is one of the troubled legacies of Britain's withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Located where the flatlands of the Punjab rise into the Himalayas, it has special autonomy under Article 370 of India's constitution. Over the decades, it has been invaded or infiltrated by Pakistan's military and witnessed several local independence movements.

At present, the state is partly governed by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), India's governing party. The BJP was in power in December 2001, when an Islamist terror attack on the New Delhi parliament was followed by Indian accusations that Pakistan had harboured the militants.

By January 2002, the Indian military had moved 500,000 troops up to the heavily disputed 700 kilometre long border that divides Indian and Pakistani controlled areas of Kashmir. The Pakistan military responded by deploying at least 300,000 of its troops into the region.

By the summer, following international fears that nuclear weapons might be used should hostilities escalate, Pakistan's prime minister Nawaz Sharif made pledges to India that he would clamp down on terrorist activity within his borders. A full ceasefire was worked out by November 2003, but the border remains fraught today.

A princely state

"The buildings of Kashmir are all of wood," wrote the Mughal Emperor Jahangir in his diary in March 1622. "The flowers that are seen in the territories of Kashmir are beyond all calculation." Jahangir's father Emperor Akbar had conquered the region in the 1580s at a time when Islam had already displaced Hinduism as the majority faith. Despotically Afghan kings replaced the Mughals in 1752, and by the early 19th century Kashmir had been incorporated into a Sikh kingdom based in Punjab.

After the British defeated the Sikhs in 1846, an astute local prince named Gulab Singh gained the trust of the latest empire builders. Jammu-Kashmir came into being as a 'princely state' after Gulab Singh purchased the territory from the British for the sum of 7.5 million rupees, making himself Maharaja. A full century later and the repressive rule of his descendant, Hari Singh, became the focus for the 'Quit Kashmir' campaign.

Earlier agitation had prompted Hari Singh to appoint the Grievances Commission, administered by a British official named BJ Glancy. As a result of its recommendations, a legislative assembly was established in 1934, representing a small section of the populace.



A REGION DIVIDED

Early 1947

Provoked by oppressive taxes, a revolt begins against the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh in the Poonch region of Kashmir. The Maharaja's forces massacre demonstrators.

15 August 1947

At midnight independent India and Pakistan come into existence. Princely states like Kashmir are encouraged to accede to either state. Hari Singh stalls and attempts to remain neutral.

26 August 1947

Hari Singh signs the Instrument of Accession putting Kashmir under Indian control. Fighting between India and Pakistan continues through 1947-8. After India refers the conflict to the UN, Resolution 47 calls for a referendum on independence.

The accession of Jammu-Kashmir remained the unresolved business of Partition. At midnight on 14 August 1947 – rhapsodised by independent India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, as a 'tryst with destiny' – the Union Jack was lowered for the last time across the Indian Raj.

Two new nations came into existence, but for all of the much lauded nonviolence associated with the independence campaign, their births had been brutal. 12 million people had been exchanged between India, with its Hindu masses, and Pakistan, conceived as a haven for South Asia's Muslims. Most of them had fled in great, desperate caravans of humanity: up to a million lives were claimed by the ensuing communal violence.

Jammu-Kashmir was one of numerous 'princely' states that initially had the option of joining either state or remaining neutral. Maharaja Hari Singh ruled Kashmir as a Hindu, although 77 per cent of his subjects were Muslim so he decided to remain neutral.

Pakistan's new Governor General and leader of the Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, coveted Kashmir. Jinnah planned an operation codenamed Gulmarg in October 1947. A local rebellion by tribesmen in the Poonch region of Jammu-Kashmir were backed by a military invasion by Pakistan Army regulars.

The objective of the Pakistan Army was to take Srinagar and secure the airport against an Indian counterattack. The Indians had forewarning of the invasion and Nehru's deputy, Sardar Patel, put pressure on him to accede into India.

Moreover, the Pashtun tribesmen got within an hour of Srinagar before halting at Baramullah. Here they embarked on a three-day orgy of vandalism, rape and the killing of over 10,000 residents. News of the massacres spread, turning Kashmiri Muslims against their would-be liberators. A profound and mutual distrust existed between Jinnah and his Muslim League, as well as the founder of Kashmir's largest party, the National Conference (NC), Sheikh Abdullah.

Panicked by the invasion and desperate for Indian military assistance, Hari Singh fled to his palace in Jammu. On 26 October 1947, he signed the Instrument of Accession, putting Jammu-Kashmir under Indian control. Numerous statements before and after the accession asserted that India would allow a plebiscite on independence that, decades on, has yet to be enacted.

As fighting continued, Nehru referred Kashmir to the United Nations, resulting in a resolution dated 13 August 1948. This requested Pakistan to withdraw its troops from the conflict zone and India to retain a token presence there. Pakistan ignored the mandate and continued fighting until a ceasefire was agreed by January 1949. Around 65 per cent of

"THE CONFLICT WOULD INVOLVE THE LARGEST AMASSING OF TROOPS BY EITHER SIDE IN KASHMIR UNTIL THE 2002 STAND-OFF AND WITNESS THE WORLD'S LARGEST TANK BATTLES SINCE 1945"

Jammu-Kashmir remained under Indian control; the boundary would later be known as the Line of Control (LoC).

Until the early 2000s it would be estimated that the LoC was one of the world's most violence-prone borders. By then, the lakes and valleys that had enchanted the Mughals were subject to near daily shelling, mortar fire and machine gun battles between the Indian Army and Pakistan-based militants.

The rise and fall of Sheikh Abdullah

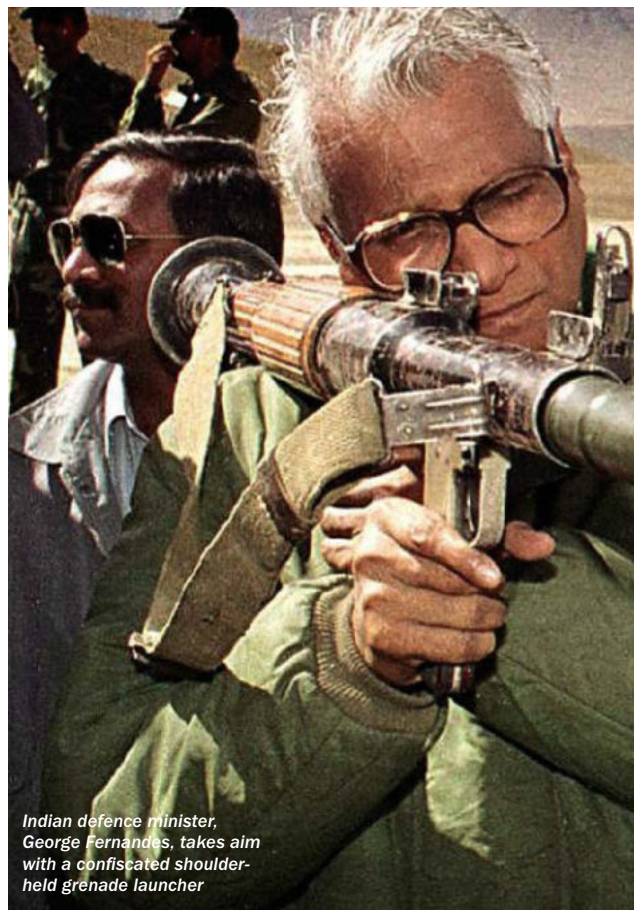
As early as 1944, the NC had approved a constitution for an independent Kashmir, but with the accession act and the 1947-8 war it seemed the future would involve autonomous rule from New Delhi. Sheikh Abdullah then became prime minister of a new administration, but as a progressive reformer he was opposed by high caste Hindus, Indian nationalists and local nobility. In August 1953, Abdullah was deposed and arrested on charges of conspiracy, being replaced by a rather more pro-Indian incumbent.

By 1958, Abdullah, now known as Sher-e-Kashmir (Lion of Kashmir), had been released and reconciled to Prime Minister Nehru. Returning to rapturous crowds in Srinagar and the possibility of a negotiated settlement with Pakistan, he was en route to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir in May 1964 when All India Radio announced the death of Nehru.

Sheikh Abdullah was said to have wept on being informed: once again interned, he would be re-released in 1968 and re-emerge as Chief Minister in 1975. By then he would have signed an accord that recognised Indian rule under Article 370. He would keep this position for the last seven years of his life and his son, Farooq Abdullah, took over the NC leadership after his death on 8 September 1982.

Indo-Pakistan Wars

Meanwhile, Pakistan's cabinet felt emboldened by the Indian defeat by China in a brief conflict during October to November 1962. The Peoples' Liberation Army had been speedily



Indian defence minister, George Fernandes, takes aim with a confiscated shoulder-held grenade launcher



Indian officers pose in front of a destroyed Sherman tank of the Pakistani military in 1965

8 August 1953

Sheikh Abdullah is dismissed as Kashmiri prime minister by the Sadr-i-Riyasat (Constitutional head of state), Dr Karan Singh, son of Hari Singh, and charged with conspiracy.

1957

In accordance with Article 370 of the constitution, Jammu-Kashmir is formally incorporated into the Indian Union. The state has special autonomy but this is gradually eroded.

August 1965

Another war between India and Pakistan begins over Kashmir. The major fighting lasts three weeks before a UN intervention and involves massive tank deployments.

July 1972

India and Pakistan sign an agreement at Simla, pledging to respect the Line of Control (LoC) between both nations. A clause decrees that the final settlement of the Kashmir issue will be decided bilaterally.



1976-7

Kashmiri nationalist Maqbool Bhat is arrested by the Indians in Kashmir. His colleague Amanullah Khan relocates to Birmingham and founds the separatist Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).



victorious and conquered a disputed border area named Aksai Chin.

Egged on by hawks – in particular his foreign minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto – Pakistan's president, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, was encouraged to authorise the infiltration of the LoC on the mistaken premise his forces could incite an indigenous resistance to Indian rule.

In August to September 1965, Pakistan again went to war with India, albeit without a formal declaration. Nevertheless, the conflict would involve the largest amassing of troops by either side in Kashmir until the 2002 stand-off and witness the world's largest tank battles since 1945. The initial fighting was within Kashmir itself and involved large concentrations of infantry and armour backed by aircraft.

The Indians were initially taken off-guard, but by mid August they took the Haji Pir Pass, eight kilometres within Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. The Pakistani Army retaliated with Operation Grand Slam, an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to cut off enemy supply routes by capturing Achnur in Jammu district.

When Achnur did not fall, the Indians attacked further south. They crossed the international border and managed to get within range of the port city of Lahore, hoisting their flag outside the city. By late September, following a massive tank battle at Chawinda in western Pakistan, the war was over. India claimed victory although Pakistan never signed a surrender document. In January 1966, an agreement was worked out under the gaze of the Soviet premier, Alexi Kosygin, in Tashkent, USSR. Both nations agreed to pull troops back to pre-August lines, transfer prisoners of war and restore diplomatic relations.

The Tashkent Declaration was criticised by the Indians, claiming it placed no compunction on Pakistan not to declare war on India or resume infiltration across the LoC. Mysteriously, the Indian prime minister, Bahadur Lal Shastri, died in Tashkent just after signing in the presence of Ayub Khan. When the two nations next went to war in 1971, the focus of the fighting was the nascent Bengali nation of Bangladesh (East Pakistan).

Nevertheless, Kashmir dominated the backdrop to the July 1972 Simla Agreement in the war's aftermath. With Bhutto now ruling Pakistan and Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, in power in India, Kashmir became diverted by other domestic concerns during the 1970s.

By the 1980s, an anti-Soviet Jihad was underway in nearby Afghanistan, while Bhutto was deposed and executed in 1979 by the avowedly pro-Islamist dictator General Zia ul-Haq. Under Zia, Pakistan became the conduit for a deluge of money and weaponry from the United States and other nations bound for the Afghan front.



A Kashmiri protester throws a stone at an emblazoned government vehicle

1979

The Afghan mujahedeen, backed by the West and Pakistan, begin an anti-Soviet Jihad that attracts foreign fighters. Some Kashmiris travel to Afghanistan and are radicalised by Salafist groups.



1987

Farooq Abdullah, son of Sheikh Abdullah, is victorious in state elections but the opposition Muslim United Front (MUF) charges that the election was rigged. The MUF candidate later becomes leader of the militant Hizb-ul-Mujahedeen group.

1 March 1990

1 million Kashmiris take place in street protests demanding the implementation of UN Article 47. The security forces kill 33 civilians in Srinagar. Over 160,000 Hindus flee the state soon after.



May 1998

India and Pakistan conduct nuclear tests within weeks of each other. Prime Minister Vajpayee declares Kashmir "an integral part of India" and says he will give up "not a single area of Indian soil."

The war drew Jihadists from across the Muslim world, infused with the fundamentalist Salafi variant of Sunni Islam. The Soviet defeat convinced them, along with many in Pakistani intelligence and the military, that a similar type of military quagmire could be replicated in Kashmir, this time to the detriment of India.

By the end of the century, with Hindu nationalists and Islamist sympathisers facing each other, a lethal new threat loomed over the Kashmir region: nuclear war.

Local Insurgency

India's position in Kashmir grew more precarious in the 1980s. Sheikh Abdullah was dead and the recommendations of the Simla Agreement displaced Nehru's guarded promises about an independence ballot.

In 1987, the NC won state elections amid accusations of fraud, violence and the arrest of an opposition figure. Within two years, an indigenous insurgency was underway that would kill at least 60,000 soldiers and civilians and displace 350,000 more.

India responded with the draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in 1990, which allowed the military wide-ranging powers to search, interrogate and arrest without warrants. Initially, the major rebel group was the secular nationalist Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) that had been cofounded by Maqbool Bhat in 1977. By the mid-1990s the JKLF had split into Pakistan- and India-based factions, the latter renouncing armed struggle.

However, the JKLF would soon be displaced by newer Salafist-inspired groups, whom the Indians charged with having covert links, not only with Afghanistan's Taliban movement and Al-Qaeda, but Pakistani intelligence.

The leader of one such faction, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, had signed up to Al-Qaeda's declaration of a Fatwa against the United States in 1998. Other groups included the Laskar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, blamed by the Indian government for the December 2001 parliament attack. Kashmiri Jihadists have travelled back and forth

“BY THE END OF THE CENTURY, WITH HINDU NATIONALISTS AND ISLAMIST SYMPATHISERS FACING EACH OTHER, A LETHAL NEW THREAT LOOMED OVER THE KASHMIR REGION: NUCLEAR WAR”



Indian soldiers in the mountainous Batalik region during the Kargil War, 1999



May-July 1999

After Indian patrols encounter militant infiltration, accused of backing by Pakistan's military, mountain fighting escalates in the Kargil region. Washington exerts pressure on Pakistan to pull forces out.

October 2001

An Islamist attack on the Srinagar parliament kills 38 people. A similar attack on the New Delhi parliament leads to a massive troop build up on the LoC by mid 2002 and threats of a nuclear exchange.



2 May 2003

India and Pakistan resume diplomatic ties. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India and President Pervez Musharraf meet at the UN Assembly in New York the following year.

June 2010

The killing of schoolboy Tufail Ahmad Mattoo by police in Srinagar sparks months of protests. The Indian government makes some concessions but protests continue.



Above: Kashmiri protesters beat an Indian policeman during protests in Srinagar 2010



Kashmiris clash with Indian soldiers and burn an effigy of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

“IN MAY, THE INDIANS LAUNCHED OPERATION VIYAY TO EXPEL ALL PAKISTANI FORCES, MILITARY OR INSURGENT, FROM THE REGION AND A NUMBER OF FIERCE MOUNTAIN BATTLES ENSUED”

from the Waziristan region of Pakistan, where another Islamist insurgency has been underway since 2004.

While violence escalated in the valleys, Kashmir opposition parties came together to form the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in 1993. In 2004, the first talks took place between the Indian government and Kashmiri separatists. The APHC encouraged negotiations but fractures formed in its leadership.

In November to December 2008 after a split in the ruling coalition, state elections had a high turnout of around 60.8 per cent, despite separatist calls for a boycott. Regardless of clashes between street protestors and the security forces, the 2008 election was judged largely fair. But the need to find a lasting settlement was now underscored by the threat of a nuclear exchange in South Asia.

India had sought the bomb in the aftermath of its 1962 defeat by China. A device was duly detonated under the deserts of Rajasthan in May 1974, to the consternation of Pakistan. President Bhutto had notoriously declared, “If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass or leaves or even go hungry but we will get one of our own.” China provided assistance by the late 1970s in the form of expertise, centrifuge technology and warhead technology. But with the assistance of a network set up by the physicist and metallurgist A Q Khan, Pakistan allegedly sourced illicit technology and expertise from Iran, Libya and North Korea.

Thus when India, now under a hawkish Bharatiya Janata Party administration, detonated five nuclear devices in May 1998. Pakistan followed suit with six underground tests by the end of the same month.

When war broke out in May 1999 between the two countries over the Kargil district – a stretch of Himalayan mountain range 8,700 feet above sea level – Washington sought to reign in Pakistan. As in 1947 and 1965, Pakistani troops had crossed the LoC disguised as irregulars and accompanied by contingents of Laskar-e-Taiba.

This time India was elusive about declaring war, with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee calling the violence in Kargil a “war-like situation”. In the mean time, in response to Indian accusations that Nawaz Sharif’s government was backing Islamist infiltration into Kashmir. Sharif’s foreign minister told the press, “We did not start the insurgency in Kashmir which is populous, spontaneous and we cannot stop it.”

But external powers, fearing nuclear confrontation, certainly sought to stop the Kargil conflict. In May, the Indians launched Operation Vijay to expel all Pakistani forces, military or insurgent, from the region and a number of fierce mountain battles ensued.

Nawaz Sharif was summoned by Bill Clinton to the White House in July and told to end the campaign. In 1965 Pakistan’s rulers had been dismayed when their Cold War benefactor declared neutrality, as Indian troops encroached on Lahore.

The Kargil conflict ended with no American promises of aid, weaponry or even diplomatic pressure on India. By the end of the year Sharif had been deposed in a coup d’etat by his army chief, General Pervez Musharraf.

Border tensions

In 2013, following a long exile and a period in opposition, Sharif returned for a third term as Pakistan’s prime minister, heading a pro-business conservative administration. On the far side of Kashmir’s LoC, the similarly nationalistic BJP swept to power in March 2015, led by Narendra Modi. The BJP were also victorious in Jammu-Kashmir, where they formed a coalition with the Peoples’ Democratic Party.

Since the 2008 election violence has subsided in the region. In October the following year, India withdrew 15,000 troops from Jammu district, placing security in the hands of the police. But violence again ignited in June 2010 after the police shot dead a 17-year-old boy following riots in Srinagar. The opposition forces began a ‘Quit Kashmir’ campaign for the 21st century. Its demands included the revocation of the AFSPA (India’s 1958 Armed Forces Special Powers Act), the release of political prisoners and Indian recognition that Jammu-Kashmir is an international conflict.

By September the government had announced certain concessions. The following August, then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah – grandson of Sheikh Abdullah – announced an amnesty for 1,200 young men arrested during the 2010 protests. However, the AFSPA remains in place along with a heavy troop presence in Kashmir. The LoC saw deadly skirmishes during 2014-5 and after nearly seven decades, one of the world’s oldest conflicts has gone through peaks and troughs of violence. Given the added presence of nuclear conflict, a lasting resolution cannot come soon enough.



5 June 2013

Nawaz Sharif returns as prime minister and leader of the conservative Pakistan Muslim League. He had previously been deposed by his military chief, Musharraf.

October 2014

Violence across the LoC kills 18 people. India and Pakistan exchange angry accusations. There are more incidents that kill soldiers and civilians that year.



March 2015

Nationwide elections result in a decisive victory for the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In Jammu-Kashmir they form a coalition with the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) with Mufti Mohammed Sayeed of the PDP as Chief Minister.

7 January 2016

Mufti Mohammed Sayeed passes away, aged 79, from multiple organ failure. The PDP supports his daughter as a new incumbent with BJP cooperation.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Our pick of the newest military history titles waiting for you on the shelves

SOLDIER, SPY A SURVIVOR'S TALE

Writer: Victor Gregg (with Rick Stroud)

Publisher: Bloomsbury **Price:** £16.99 (Hardback)

Released: Out now

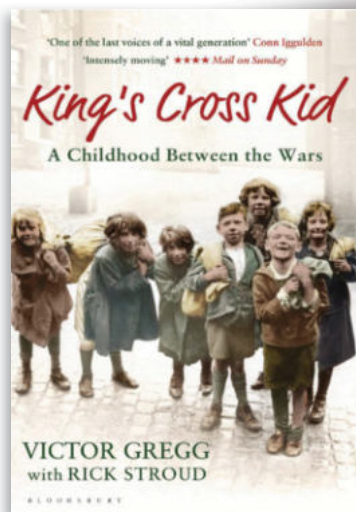
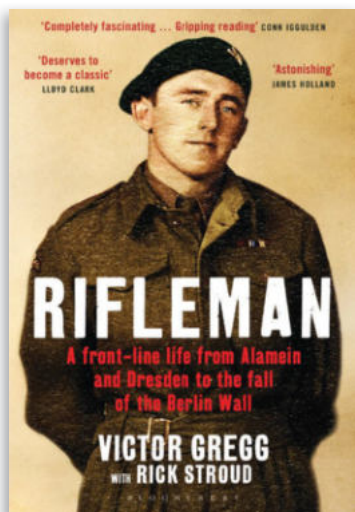
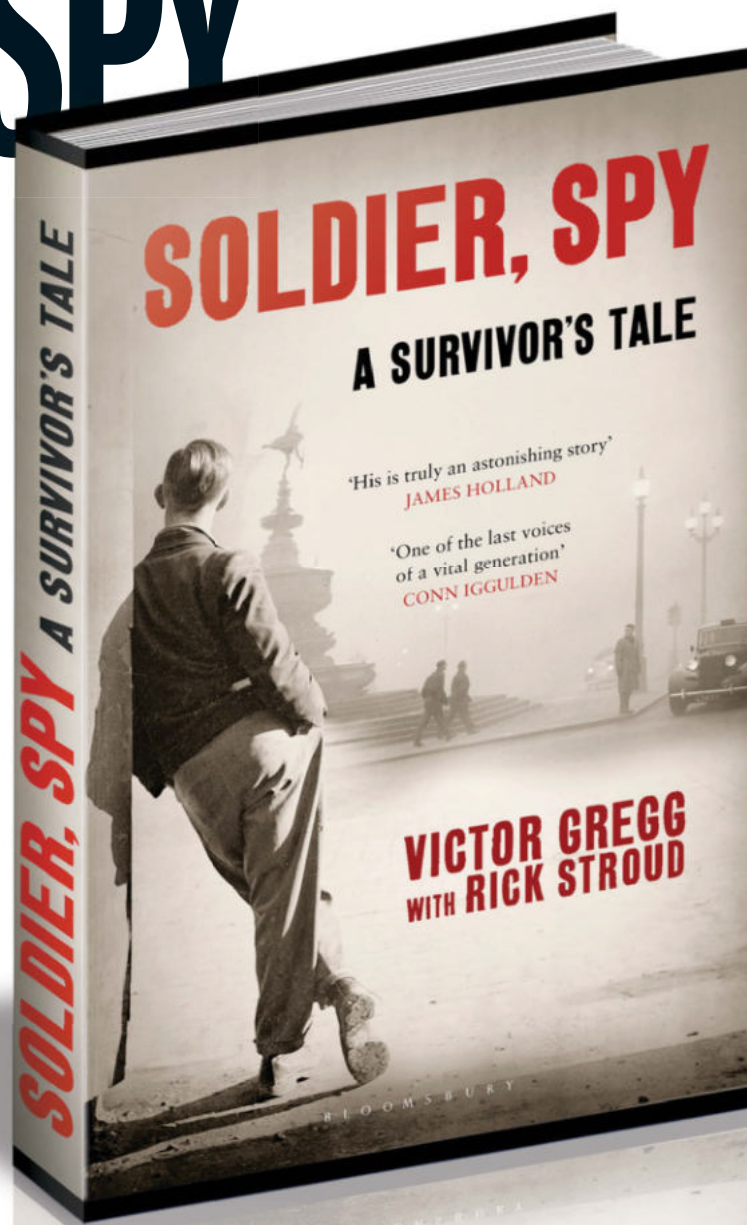
FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE BESTSELLING *RIFLEMAN* IS A FASCINATING AND MOVING WORK ABOUT COLD WAR ESPIONAGE, THE MENTAL COST OF WAR AND HELPING TO BRING DOWN THE BERLIN WALL

Soldier, Spy is the third book in a trilogy by 96-year-old Victor Gregg, about his dramatic life. His first book, *Rifleman*, which told the story of his wartime service in World War II, was a great success when it was published back in 2011. It was followed in 2013 with *King's Cross Kid*, a prequel account of growing up in London during the interwar years. Now Gregg has come full circle with *Soldier, Spy*, which recounts his experiences adjusting to the post-war world and his involvement in Cold War spying activities.

Gregg fought at El Alamein and Arnhem, among many other

places, and ended his war by miraculously surviving the firestorm of Dresden. This infamous bombing mentally scarred Gregg and the horror of what he saw is a dark shadow that haunts much of the book.

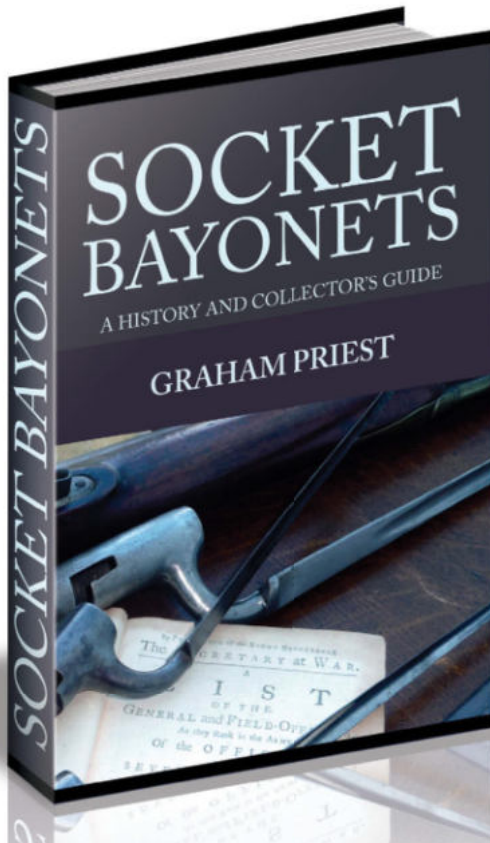
After he was demobbed, Gregg, like many, struggled to readjust to civilian life and threw himself into different activities, largely to suppress the demons the war had left him with. On the one hand he was an ordinary family man working as decorator and driver. But he was also a member of the Communist Party and known to the British security services. Eventually



he was recruited as a spy and went travelling behind the Iron Curtain. When he was 70 he played a part in bringing down the Berlin Wall.

However, Gregg could not escape his demons and his personal life suffered greatly. In many ways *Soldier, Spy* is not just a unique insight into the murky world of Cold War intelligence

but a brutally honest account of the cost that war can have on an individual long after the conflict itself has ended. Gregg (with his collaborator Rick Stroud) has written a highly readable and moving work, which is refreshingly unsentimental and concludes poignantly with a message of redemption and hope.



SOCKET BAYONETS

A HISTORY AND COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Author: Graham Priest **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £14.99 **Released:** Out now

A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF THIS CURIOUS WEAPON OF WAR

With its zig-zag slots and hollow cylindrical interior, the socket bayonet is a unique and intriguing tool. Following the creation of its more familiar cousin in the 17th century, the socket bayonet was a useful back-up option should a hunted animal refuse to fall from a bullet and instead charge the hunter, the potential for its military deployment soon became clear.

Adopted by England on 14 March 1662 (Priest has done his homework), the bayonet quickly removed the need for Pike men. However, the early models made the swift reloading of a musket all but impossible, a not insignificant problem in the face of a cavalry charge.

By 1669 the French has solved the problem with the first design of a 'ring' or 'socket'

bayonet. The armies of Europe, and later America, would never look back. Various incarnations of the socket were forged, some simply from wood, brass and steel, others from precious metals.

Priest catalogues the many, often beautifully decorated, styles and shapes of this evolving weapon. His history of its use on battlefields across the globe for over two centuries testify to the effectiveness of a weapon that is now only used by the British army.

As the title suggests, this book is aimed at the most avid historians of bayonets and the collectors who covet them. This being said, its pick up and put down feel may yet appeal to a wider audience.

THE FREE STATE OF JONES

Writer: Victoria E Bynum **Publisher:** Duckworth Overlook **Price:** £9.99 **Released:** Out now

THE LITTLE-KNOWN STORY OF HOW AN ANTI-SLAVERY REBEL HELPED WIN THE US CIVIL WAR FROM WITHIN AND SOW THE SEEDS OF CHANGE...

The story of the *Free State Of Jones* has inspired a forthcoming Hollywood movie and with good reason. As this book ably demonstrates, it truly is one of history's most astonishing tales.

In the spring of 1864, at the height of the American Civil war in Jones County Mississippi, in the heart of the Confederate south, the United States flag was raised over the county courthouse in Ellisville. It was the high point of an uprising led by an impoverished, white farmer and Unionist – the splendidly named Newton Knight.

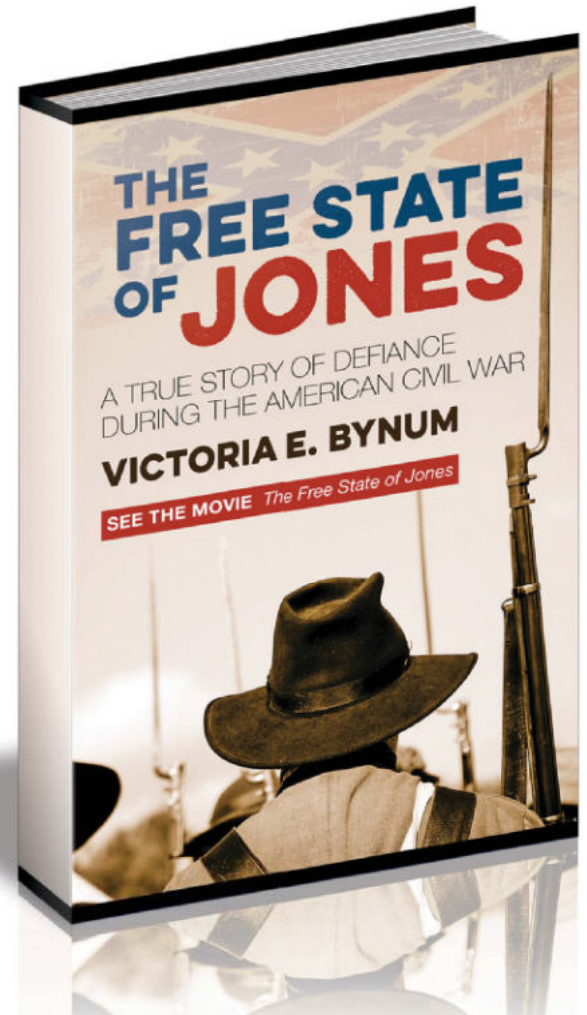
Between late-1863 and mid-1864, Knight, and his so-called Knight, Company fought a highly successful guerrilla campaign against President Jefferson Davis' seven breakaway southern states from within its own confederacy.

When the war broke out, Knight – who'd been against secession from the Union – had been conscripted into the

Confederate army. Reluctantly he had agreed to do his duty. He deserted 18 months later prompted both by the news of family problems at home, and a growing sense of injustice at the Confederacy's laws. He wasn't alone, and when he returned to Jones County he found enough like-minded deserters willing to join his Knight Company. Together they battled Confederate troops, hiding out in local swamps, from where they launched raids and established what came to be known as the Free State of Jones.

Knight survived the war but carried on causing a stir by openly living with his grandfather's former slave, and his wartime accomplice, Rachel. The five children they had together then formed the basis of a mixed-race community in the region that continued to antagonise segregated Mississippi long after the Civil War's last shots had been fired. An utterly absorbing read.

"TOGETHER THEY BATTLED CONFEDERATE TROOPS, HIDING OUT IN LOCAL SWAMPS, FROM WHERE THEY LAUNCHED RAIDS AND ESTABLISHED WHAT CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE FREE STATE OF JONES"



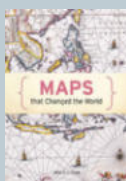
ALL ABOUT HISTORY RECOMMENDED READING



MARY ROSE OWNERS' WORKSHOP MANUAL

The Mary Rose was an innovative design for its time and the largest built for purpose when it was launched in 1510, proving itself in a number of battles around the French

coast and English Channel, before capsizing after taking too sharp a tactical turn in February 1543. It then sank into the Solent on the south coast of England. This *Haynes Manual* details the Mary Rose's active military history and recovery for the uninitiated, but history buffs will welcome the middle chapters that deal with rarer knowledge of the Mary Rose's construction, its crew and its effectiveness in war.



MAPS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

With a gorgeous cover, glossy thick pages and luscious maps and imagery inside, this book deserves to be displayed rather than stuffed between inferior books on a shelf.

However, it is more than just a pretty face, as inside you'll find a comprehensive history of navigation and cartography. From the first time humans tried to portray the world as they knew it on stone tablets to the many changing maps of Israel as political forces pushed and pulled at its borders, author John OE Clark provides insight into the relationship between man and Earth.



NO MORE SOLDIERING: CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

With this work, author Stephen Wade attempts to draw a strong line of distinction between his take

on events and traditional accounts that have painted conscientious objectors as at best cowards and at worst traitors and collaborators. He focuses on the history leading up to the introduction of the Military Service Act of 1916, for the first time requiring forced conscription of civilians into the British Army, before highlighting the ire heaped on those who refused to fight. However, right from the opening paragraph you know what the conclusion will be, and this lack of balance detracts from what is otherwise a well-written book.



THE REAL DAD'S ARMY

The Real Dad's Army follows the accounts of author Norman Longmate – formerly of the Third Sussex Battalion, Home Guard – and his experiences of the war. Having joined the real equivalent of the long-running

series at the age of 17, Longmate has high praise for how accurate the situations comedy was in comparison to his experiences. Within these pages, you may not learn anything new factually about World War II, but you will take away a new perspective on what the reality was like, from the weapons and camaraderie, to the final surge towards a win and a final push to come home.

HUNTER KILLER

INSIDE AMERICA'S UNMANNED AIR WAR

Author: Lt. Col. T. Mark McCurley **Publisher:** Allen & Unwin **Price:** £8.99

THE REVELATORY STORY OF THE MEN BEHIND AMERICA'S UNMANNED DRONES

The deadly Predator drones that stalk the skies of the Middle East are the spearhead of the USA's military operations. From reconnaissance missions to hunting members of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, these \$3.2 million dollar steel birds, powered by a 115 horsepower four cylinder snowmobile engine, have revolutionised warfare.

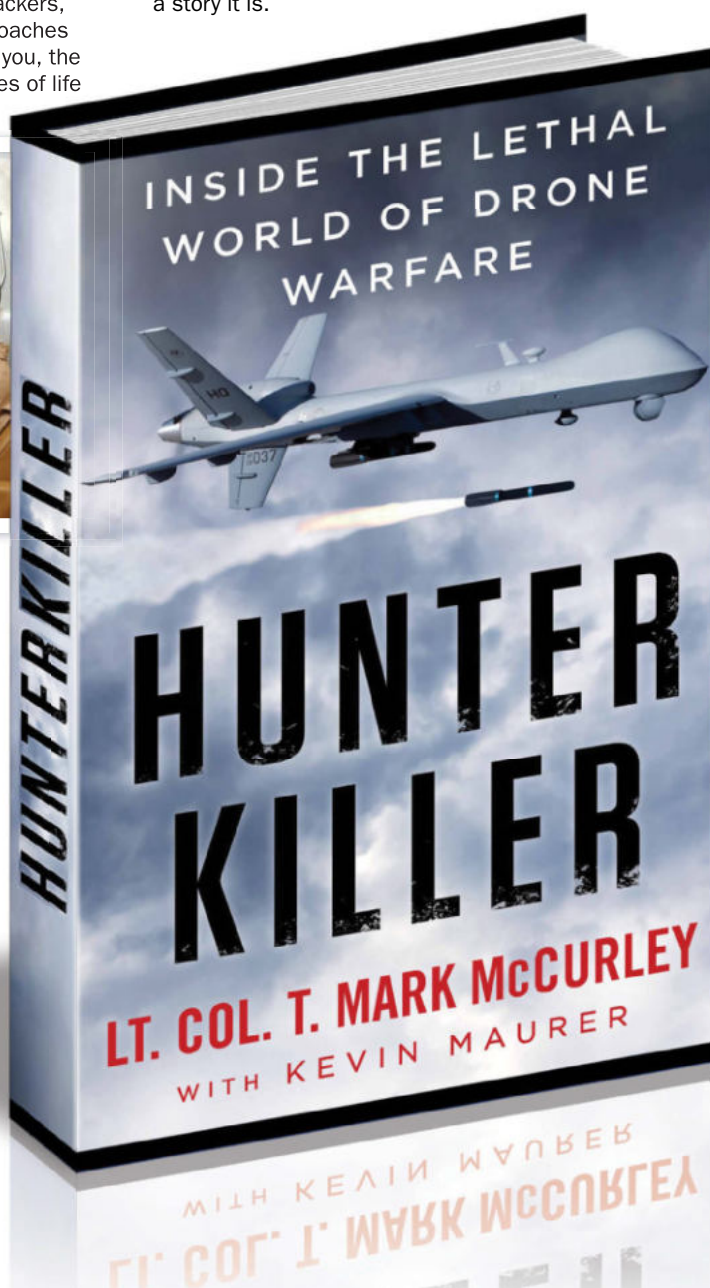
Lt Col T Mark McCurley charts their meteoric rise from much maligned contraptions (first flown in 1994) to devastating weapons in this brilliant account of his years spent flying them from a sea land container in the Nevada desert and the Djibouti coast.

His story explodes into life from the first page with the exhilarating pursuit of Anwar al-Awlaki, a contact of the 9/11 hijackers, which culminates as the book approaches its conclusion. If that doesn't hook you, the fascinating insight McCurley provides of life back on the drone base surely will.



Above: An operator in the chair controlling a Predator drone

"THESE \$3.2 MILLION DOLLAR STEEL BIRDS, POWERED BY A 115 HORSEPOWER FOUR CYLINDER SNOWMOBILE ENGINE, HAVE REVOLUTIONISED WARFARE"



VERDUN 1916

THE DEADLIEST BATTLE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Writer: William F Buckingham **Publisher:** Amberley Publishing

Price: £20 **Released:** Out now

A SUPERB RETELLING OF HOW GERMANY GAMBLER ON WINNING WORLD WAR I BY SLAUGHTERING A GENERATION OF FRENCHMAN IN ONE GO

If you ever visit the site of the Battle of Verdun in France, scuff the ground with your foot. It's not unlikely you'll uncover a piece of debris – a human bone or a shell cartridge – from the terrible slaughter that took place there in 1916.

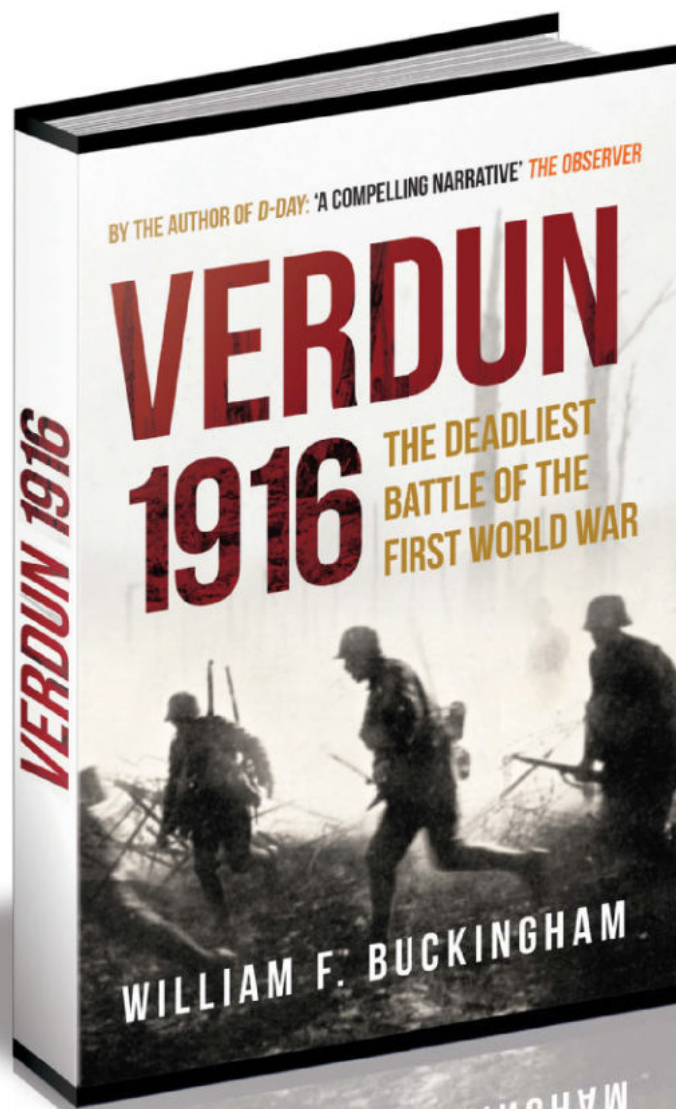
During its 300 days, the battle chewed up 200 square kilometres of countryside so badly that 100 years on still nothing grows in parts of that tragic land. Indeed some areas are still designated 'Zone Rouge' by the French – no-go areas where the poisoned earth is infested with unexploded shells.

Hundreds of thousands of troops lost their lives in a battle that was more about national pride than being of any strategic importance. This, after all, was an area Attila The Hun had never conquered, a place that had later been ceded to the Germans in 843 and won back by the French at the end of the Thirty Years' War.

It was a place, the Germans figured, that the French would never allow to fall. In other words, it was the ideal killing ground.

World War I, a conflict of attrition, had its own simple but vile logic. The winner would be the side that killed its enemy at a faster rate than its own troops died. And so, German Chief of Staff General Von Falkenhayn, looked at the map and pointed to Verdun as the place where, in his own cynical words he would "bleed France white".

This well-known story is expertly retold in Buckingham's book, whose latest offering is a dramatic mix of master narrative and touching personal accounts. Where *Verdun 1916* particularly excels is its inclusion of German versions of a battle that's largely been told from an Allied point of view. Important, then, because despite Falkenhayn's prediction, as many Germans were lost at Verdun as Frenchmen.



LITTLE CYCLONE

Author: Airey Neave **Publisher:** Biteback **Price:** £8.99 **Released:** Out now

THE THRILLING YET TRAGIC STORY OF A WOMAN WHO RISKED IT ALL TO SAVE ALLIED SERVICEMEN TRAPPED BEHIND GERMAN LINES IN WWII

If you ever find yourself searching for a tale of unimaginable courage in the face of seemingly impossible odds, then you would do well to find *Little Cyclone*. Courage through adversity courses through this book.

Originally published in 1954, *Little Cyclone* recounts the incredible story of Andrée De Jongh. A Belgian artist in her twenties at the time of the Wehrmacht's march on Brussels in 1940, De Jongh went on to spirit 800 Allied servicemen out of Occupied Belgium and France, over the Pyrenees and all the way to the British consulate in Bilbao.

At immense risk to herself, De Jongh worked tirelessly as part of the Comet Line (a cell of

undercover agents) to return these seemingly doomed men, many of them downed pilots, to the safety of Allied territory. Her nickname of Little Cyclone, given to her by her father due to her determination and refusal to be beaten, proved to be a fitting moniker.

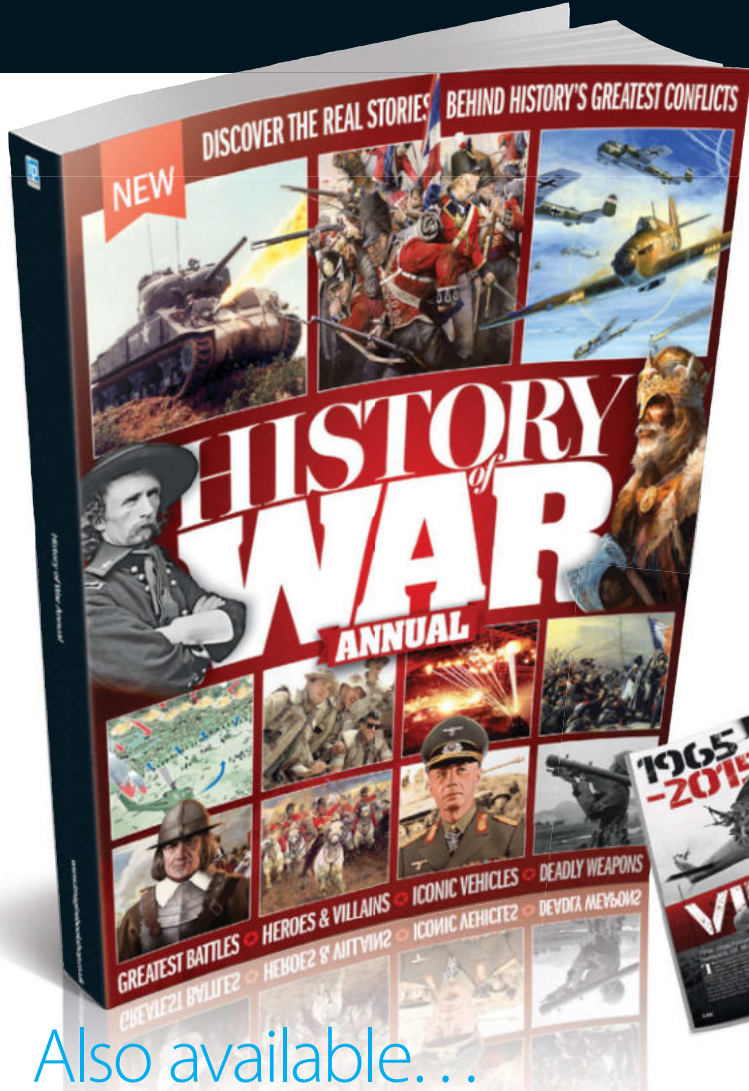
Tragically, many of the brave men and women of the Comet Line were repaid for their bravery with the ultimate sacrifice at the hands of German officers, who deceived the group into revealing their existence and many of their members. Thanks to author Airey Neave, their remarkable actions and, for many, untimely deaths, will now be secure in the annals of WWII.

“TRAGICALLY, MANY OF THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE COMET LINE WERE REPAID FOR THEIR BRAVERY WITH THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE AT THE HANDS OF GERMAN OFFICERS”

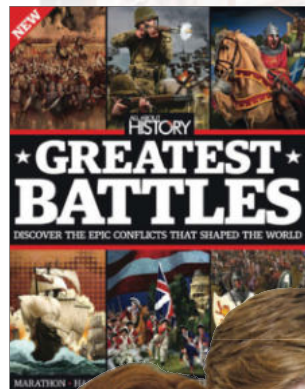
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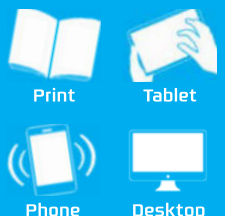
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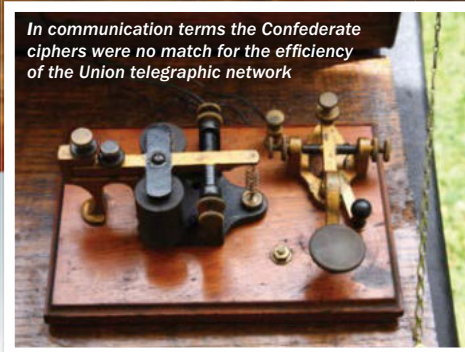
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Above: Although primitive in appearance, the cipher wheel could contain encryptions that were theoretically unbreakable... if used properly

In communication terms the Confederate ciphers were no match for the efficiency of the Union telegraphic network



CONFEDERATE CIPHER WHEEL

In the secretive corners of the American Civil War, devices like this were used to relay coded messages

This Confederate cipher wheel was captured by Union forces at the surrender of Mobile, Alabama in May 1865. It was sent to the Chief Signal Officer in Washington as a war trophy and is a rare example of Confederate coding methods. The conflict in general is famous for its pioneering use of the wire telegraph for communications. The Union's telegraphic system was reputed to have been so efficient that messages from all military areas could be sent directly to

Washington. The Confederate communication system, on the other hand, was much more limited, in particular suffering from a lack of wire. When it came to sending coded messages, they used an encrypting method that was centuries old, but with limited effect.

This wheel uses the Vigenère system of ciphering; a manual encryption method that utilises a substitution code based on a tableau of 26 staggered alphabets with row shifts and a key. Using this approach the wheel bears in faint pencilled notation the name of Confederate Signal Officer Captain Thomas Hawkins Clagett Jr of Leesburg, Virginia and several of his men.

Vigenère ciphers were first documented in Italy in 1467 and were traditionally known to be indecipherable, but the Confederates struggled to use them. Their security was lax and message preparations were less accurate than their Union counterparts. In Richmond, the Confederate government even advertised in newspapers for help with deciphering captured Union messages. Though cryptologists eventually were able to

regularly decode devices such as this, the wheel is arguably an ancestor of the much more successful Enigma machine.

“VIGENÈRE CIPHERS WERE FIRST DOCUMENTED IN ITALY IN 1467 AND WERE TRADITIONALLY KNOWN TO BE INDECIPHERABLE, BUT THE CONFEDERATES STRUGGLED TO USE THEM”



The German Enigma machine was used throughout the Second World War to encode military transmissions



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